THE CANNONEERS HAVE HAIRY EARS

A Diary of the Front Lines

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A Diary of the Front Lines

Anonymous

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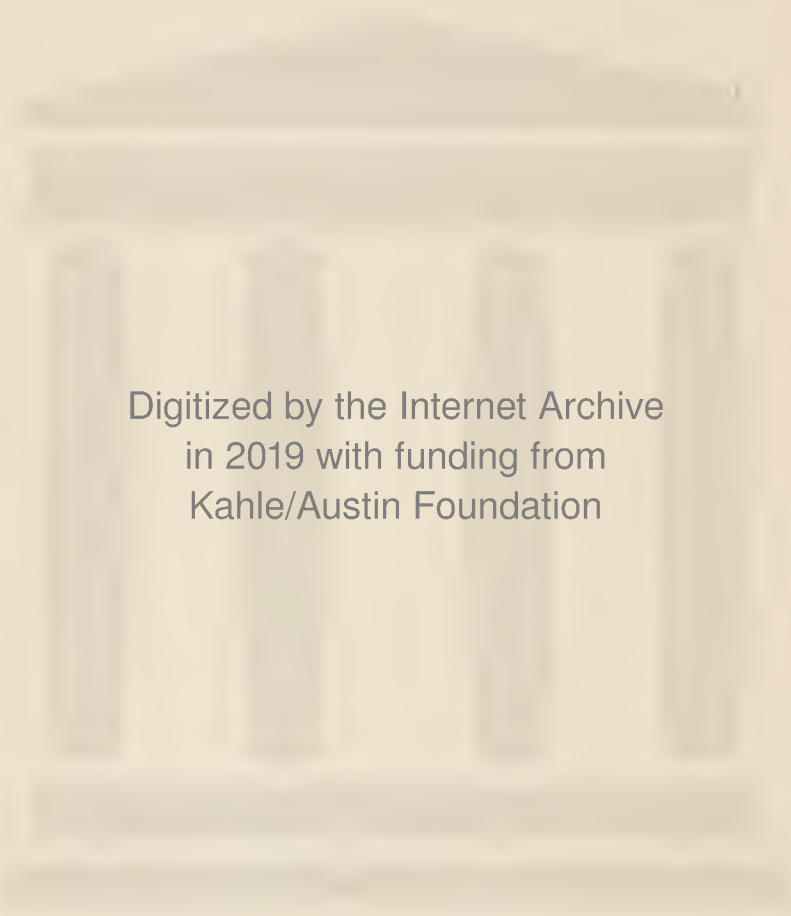
TO ANYBODY

If I should become a casualty, please see that this book is mailed to my wife —address on inside front cover.



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"The cannoneers have hairy ears . . .
They slap their leather breeches—"

(You know the rest of it.)

Introduction

This work is the unedited Journal of a combat unit of the United States Field Artillery—the story of one Battery of seventy-fives from the date on which it was hurriedly called out of the training sector at Valdahon, until that November morning on which the last shot of the Great War was fired, and, as such, may properly be accepted as the story of most combat units. Necessarily without form, or definite continuity, it is, none the less, a remarkable literary performance, composed, though it was, to an accompaniment of shell-fire.

From the book the reader will miss, perhaps, certain linguistic spices and savours that have given a pungency to other war records, yet the men of the author's battery *did* speak the language of the A.E.F. with fluency, including references, on occasions, to definite canine ancestry as well as numerous colorful Anglo-Saxon monosyllables. The author's avoidance of these sprightly terms was due in no degree whatever to any personal squeamishness, but because the Journal was kept for the eyes of a Lady—a Lady into whose hands it might possibly fall only after the author himself had been transferred to somewhere in the far silence and thus rendered unable, in person, to explain his yearnings for realism. Futhermore,

the language of this Battery, the author surmises, was probably as chaste as that of an average group of college students, and it improved steadily as the repetition of certain open-air expletives ceased to soothe. Moreover, as the author makes beautifully clear, the average American soldier was not the introspective Russian novelist that certain war fiction would have us believe. He appears, herein, not to have been concerned at all about the status of his soul, nor the many and muddled causes that had dragged him out of an Alabama back-lot to make the world safe for anything in particular. Certainly his primary, and frequently his only, questions with regard to the murderous trade to which he found himself apprenticed were:

(a) "When do we eat?"

(b) "Where do we go from here?"

Of the conditions under which the Journal was kept and of its author, the reader may be interested in knowing that before the "outfit" left Valdahon, the author bought a fountain-pen, a packet of ink-tablets, four notebooks, and a ream of coördinate paper. The paper and two of the notebooks he carried in his saddlebags; the rest of his literary equipment was stowed away in the pockets of his blouse. The Journal was pen-kept, so to speak, until the Battery arrived at Romange, where its author discovered an ancient typewriter in a compartment of the reel-fourgon. The variety of style in the work may be thus, in some degree, accounted for.

Obviously, the author declares, an artilleryman would have a far better opportunity to keep a detailed Journal than an infantryman, for, even though the Battery were seldom more than one thousand yards behind the front lines, an efficient battery functioned like a machine, and the executive officer found plenty of time on his hands. As a matter of fact, the author's Battery spent the last days of the war *ahead of the infantry*, yet was composed, in greater part, of high-school boys from Springfield, Illinois. The outfit was detached from the 33rd Division and sent into the line as "circus" artillery, which means that it was not hauled out with divisions, but remained in action when new divisions came up. For accuracy, efficiency, and conduct under fire it was cited several times, twice by Major General Summerall.

The Battery's "boss," and author of this book, attended the first officers' training camp at Fort Sheridan and was "benzined" on graduation day. He has held the belief that his *debacle* was directly attributable to his having referred to an instructor in terms not of praise, in the presence of certain of that instructor's favorites. The original difference of opinion had concerned the possibility of adjusting the height-of-burst of a shell with the angle-of-site-setting, and unfortunately the author was right. So keenly did his instructor appreciate his pupil's qualities as an artilleryman, that he urged him to remain in the Army—as a private in infantry!

The author, however, not to be defeated in his desires, fared to Springfield, Illinois, where the Third Illinois Field Artillery was being organized, and, after telling his story to Colonel Gordon Strong, enlisted as a private in September, 1917. Three months later he was commissioned as Second Lieutenant and within thirty days was promoted to a First Lieutenancy. He went through the 58th Brigade Technical School, the school of fire, at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and in May, 1918, sailed for France as executive officer of "A" Battery, in which position he remained until the last week of the war, when he served as regimental reconnaissance officer. In October, 1918, he was awarded a Captaincy, but in the meantime had received three citations, one of them signed by General Pershing himself. Thus, the author—Here, then, his book.

KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN.

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Mont Sec

Horses, Men and Guns

Up and At 'Em

VALDAHON, *August 22, 1918.*—Doc Duffy says I probably will live if I can make it as far as the Front where men are men and hospitals are few. He says I've had influenza—which seems to be the medical equivalent of a disorderly conduct charge. I have it yet, for that matter, but raw eggs and cognac seem to be easing the pain between my knees and furnishing an excuse for a slight mental wooziness.

It is now that witching hour just after taps and the camp is theoretically silent. The war that Duff talked about an hour ago seems to be quite a distance from here. This is the top of the world where it is always twilight. There is a misty glow to the southeast where France steps up into the Alps. White roads blend with it. The groves over there on the rim of the plateau are frosty under it.

One might sit here and become quite romantic over the wistful beauty of this lovely butcher shop, were it not for the yammering of the female warriors in comic opera uniforms who occupy the Y.M.C.A. barracks next door. The girls apparently have their hearts in their work. All day long they rush at breakneck speed in their little flivver trucks from one Y.M.C.A. hut to another Y.M.C.A. hut and back again, much as Joan of Arc might have done had she been a Y.M.C.A. truck driver—each striving to win

the war in her own little way. And at night they are too tired to sleep and so discus stactics and maneuver with one another while a phonograph blats the martial strains of "Allah's Holiday," "There's a Long, Long Trail," "Over There," and "Missouri Waltz."

And to-morrow all this is over for us.

"We pull out at 2 o'clock," Duff said when he came in with his raw eggs. "I told Hackett you'd be O. K. for the trip. You may croak on the road—that's a chance—but if you stay here you'll have to go to the post hospital and in a week they'll be hanging your boots on a strange horse and dragging you out to a permanent emplacement on a Fifth Division caisson. . . . Take your pick, kid. . . ."

So Duff dressed me and packed my trunk for shipment to the American Express dump in Paris. He'll be back after me in the morning and then, God willing, we shall set out arm in arm or stirrup to stirrup to do deeds of high emprise. As executive I shall be in command of the column as far as Besançon or some such silly place while the battery commander rides forward to take ready for us on the loading platform, and even in my present delirium I can foresee that the battery is likely to find itself in Switzerland unless the raw eggs and alcohol hold out. . . . But, what ho! maybe the Doc will be able to see the road and it is time that he learned something about artillery maneuver. He can have the parade. I shall watch him with interest, providing I am able to stick on the horse.

In the meantime I am sitting here pinned in a blanket, looking out upon the sheer beauty of a moonlit night and starting upon this journal, which one day may enlighten an expectant world and then

again may come to an ignominious and useless end in the mud of a ditch.

A woman—one of the Y.M.C.A. ladies—is telling the palpitant night that she "won't come back till it's over, over there." A woman . . . possibly the loneliness wouldn't seem quite so poignant—the old life so far away—if she could contrive somehow to leave music to the nightingales.

To-morrow there will be no women even remotely connected with our lives. You are going to the wars, my lads, to the jolly old wars . . . horses and men and guns and men and horses. The Great Adventure. . . . That's what we came here for . . . what we've been asking for. But it may not be all delirium that suggests the thought that some of us are going forward gayly to a permanent berth in Ragnarok.

Across the parade ground the men's barracks are still. The Cannoneers don't know yet, probably, that to-morrow's reveille will see them on their way to green fields and pastures new. If they have been told in advance it is likely that all of them feel the same as I do about the projected trip. They know also that death has enlisted with us, but of course they feel only an impersonal interest in the matter. Every cannoneer knows that somebody will presently be mustered out. But each one knows that he will not be the one. The psychology of battles is that somebody else's widow is going to collect the insurance. *Morituri salutamus!*

Route Order

Besançon, *August 23.*—Reveille at 2 A.M. . . . It is a dizzy memory now—a hazy picture of shadows moving through the park—poor, dumb, skinny horse

emerging unexpectedly into the light of the lanterns to look with great annoyance in their melancholy eyes upon gentlemen carrying metal collars and other items of harness—the glint of flash lights on the hooded tubes of Seventy-fives and on the oily green rectangles of caissons—a movement of shadows merging with larger shadows or spilling out in jagged tides on to the white road—and with it at an obbligato of clinking chains and milling hoofs.

Duffy was on time. More raw eggs. . . . More raw cognac.

We emerged into a bone-biting chill—more noticeable after ten days in bed and under blankets. The Y.M.C.A. warriors had finally forced themselves to sleep and their bungalow was a silhouette against the white stone walls of adjoining barracks. But there were ghostly sounds in the air—the note of bugles and the hoarse voices of sergeants "falling in" the batteries—then the scuffling of feet as the warriors prepared for their final breakfast in camp. . . . The scent of boiling coffee and afterwards as we went on toward the park the more pungent odors of leather and horses.

Then the harnessing and hitching, which, thank the Lord, proceeded automatically enough, and in the dark the Doc relayed the orders. If there was anything incongruous in the spectacle of a lieutenant of the Medical Corps grooming a battery of field artillery for its first useful work, the night was kind. The colonel came only once and then for a stay that was mercifully brief. Dawn had not yet come when the bugles cut loose:

"Prepare to Mount! Mount! Right by Section. . . . March. . . . Pieces Front. . . . March. . . . Column left. . . . March. . . ."

Duffy sank back into his saddle with an audible sigh . . . surprised to see that his shouted interpretation of the calls had been properly understood. The regiment was presently clattering out through the gates. . . . On the way!

We passed out of camp on to a road said to have carried the late Julius Cæsar on a similar expedition. Before we had wound out of town the sky to the east was showing light streaks through the purple beyond the mountains. The white mists were still hanging to clefts in the blue hills and settling down like a veil among the trees that lined the highway.

It was little like what I had imagined the beginning of a journey to the Front would be—no cheering, no pomp, no panoply—a long line of clanking guns and caissons, clattering wagons, impatient horses, silent men.

Even at route order no one talked. The prospect of a climax to all the months of training—the prospect of a speedy finish—aroused no great excitement. This possibly is the purpose of discipline—the submission of the individual will to the command of necessity—that one may take any order as a part of a day's work.

By the time we passed Hôpital de Gros Bois the natives were astir—old men, women and children—but they paid little attention to us. Passing artillery has ceased to interest the folks who live beyond the fences of Valdahon. Other batteries have gone out over the same road during the past four years. Some of them are still in action. Some of them aren't. An endless tide of cannon flows up from rear to front. It will not—cannot—cease. *C'est la guerre!* The tired old men of France have grown dim-eyed with watching it.

The trip was uneventful until our arrival at the village below Hôpital on our way down the hill. The executive officer, half asleep, hung dizzily to a horse in the column behind the caisson of the second section. A nodding caisson corporal jogged along beside him. Even without the enveloping mist that gave a vague unreality to the procession, the quietness of the march suggested a moving picture or a dream——

Then the executive awakened. A new sound had entered the metal symphony, the creaking of an ungreased wagon and the groaning of a wooden carriage frame.

The artillery column was well over to the right of the road and this odd note had come from the left and behind.

The officer turned abruptly in his saddle. Could this be more delirium?

A thin and weak-kneed horse staggered forward between the shafts of a decrepit cart. On the seat, as erect as the cannoneers themselves, sat three civilians in the habiliments of woe. Their costumes were black, turning green with age; their hats were broad—a Quakerish design—and also black and woebegone; their mustaches, sleek and well groomed, had been combed down in a curve indicative of perpetual solemnity. Broad ties of crêpe were bound about their celluloid collars.

Here were Frenchmen of a new and unexpected design. The lieutenant stared and blinked his eyes. The corporal cursed surprisedly.

"Cheerful looking birds," he observed. He started to say more but checked himself. The rest of the cart that had usurped a place in the battery's line of march was now abreast and fully visible. And out over its tail gate, bumping up and down noisily at

every movement of the ossified springs, was perched a coffin. A beaded black *couronne mortuaire* hung jauntily to the corner and flapped like a widow's veiling in the wind.

"God help us!" prayed the corporal. And subconsciously he pulled away farther toward the edge of the road.

So for two miles or more the march of the battery became a funeral procession: piece—caisson—coffin. . . . A formation covered not even remotely in the drill regulations. At a crossroad the drooping mourners pulled their drooping steed to the left and in a moment were gone and one could not but feel that their going had cleared the atmosphere. A soldier may know that he rides with death. But he gets no great joy out of its tangible reminders.

The superstitious ones have had an orgy of omen on the march. With the day's journey half done, we encountered a baby Peugeot climbing the hill. In the tonneau was another somber black box. Owing to the cramped accommodations it was standing almost straight on end—the part of it in the car tied down with ropes, the remainder extending rakishly over the rear seat—possibly an uncomfortable position for the corpse.

The driver, looking for information, pulled up alongside Duffy and in a hurt tone explained his unhappy position. He was an undertaker and he had lost his road. Somewhere in France were the sorrowing relicts of old Monsieur Fournier. Somewhere a church was waiting with open doors for a funeral that already had been subjected to a scandalous delay. Somewhere, he admitted, the remains of this late lamented would be more welcome than they

possibly could be in their present predicament as part of an artillery outfit.

The undertaker got little consolation from the cannoneers whose maps failed to show that section of France where the good M. Fournier had lived his undoubtedly useful life. He moved on again to the south only to return once more within the hour and to patrol the column backward and forward until a signpost saved him from the hysteria that was manifestly so close to him.

As for the battery, although the undertaker had worn out his welcome, there was little uneasiness. M. Fournier, it appeared, had died of old age—a procedure which all France must of necessity hail with the blaring of bugles and the banners of holiday. Certainly his was an end which a soldier could not but envy.

We camped during the heat of the day by the side of a blue pool reaching out through yellowing fields toward a weed-grown hill and resumed our march under the stars.

For perhaps a mile the way led upward and then shut its eyes and dived into a tunnel, emerging presently into an explosion of white moonlight under the eaves of the roof of the world. From this attic window on the plateau one looked out over a vista of purple valley lighted with silver: winding roadway plunging downward between tall poplars, gaunt and spectral; a lightless village; a vaulted viaduct; and beyond, the twisting, scarf-like brightness that was an historic river.

Here the legions of Varus may have halted in their *marche macabre* into Gaul to marvel at the beauty that spilled down the hillside before them. It was not

difficult to see the line of guns and caissons replaced by stout figures in casque and breastplate, leaning on long spears, as they gazed in breathless wonderment into the valley.

Down through the village, beneath the viaduct and out on to a cliff road the battery rolled.

The moon rose higher with each kilometer post until, when we were within sight of the Besançon citadel, the valley was filled with a soft bluish twilight.

Suddenly from every hilltop great beams of light shot upward, swept the sky, crossed each other and came slowly down the cliffs. One of them found us and followed us like an inquisitive comet for a mile down the trail.

Here was our initial contact with the war. . . . All day long, we learned, Gerry had been flying over the valley. All day long the anti-aircraft batteries had been chasing him; and now the searchlights were driving up through the clouds to make sure that he was not still hidden there.

We passed through a cleft in the rock beneath the stronghold of which Cæsar is said to have remarked: "There with seven men I can defy the world." Presently the tenth-century gate echoed with strangely modern noises and we were moving over the cobbles of twisted alleys in Hugo's city of cloak and sword.

The town was in darkness save for an occasional hooded street lamp. Shopkeepers were bolting paneled shutters across their windows. Here and there a door was open and one caught a glimpse of a depleted grocery stock and a woman—or a graybeard—checking over the day's receipts at a blackened

counter. Now and again came a momentary view of a belated supper table—always surrounded by women and children. Through the shadows, with all the mystery of Hugo's time, half-defined figures flitted—women again, ladies and harlots, both with tired, sad eyes, or soldiers in the uniforms of a dozen nations.

They paused to look at us. They were not like the ancients of the hillside. The spectacle of Youth traveling toward death in trappings of iron had not lost its romance for them.

Universally they hailed us with the greeting—in English—that every soul in the city has learned during the past few weeks:

"Good-by, *Américains*. . . . Good luck!"

And there came children—some of them in night-dresses—to run along the column and jabber cheerful French at drivers and cannoneers who answered them just as gayly in English. The battery passed on toward the Polygon. . . .

And over the bastioned walls and half-seen spires there settled darkness and silence and brooding melancholy.

War's Back Door

En Route

Foug, *August 24.*—There are five of us—the battery officers and a French interpreter—in a compartment designated for four. As a result we have had to sit up all night. Had there been only four of us two could have stretched out on the floor and one on each of the seats. But these elemental mathematics did not include the arrival of the interpreter. He clambered aboard just as the train was pulling out of Besançon and here he is—heaven bless him. By the dawn's early light he seems to be just as unhappy as we are—and he should be.

I am still running a fever and my legs are dead from the crotch to the ankles but for all that I feel better than I did yesterday. The old noodle is clearing up a bit and I am beginning to notice that I dislike the cognac. It seems to be a sort of potable garbage but I shan't tell Duffy about that. As a cure for influenza it has its points, even though one might prefer to be cured with champagne.

The loading of this circus was something worth coming miles to see. It was all plotted out on a schedule as long as a list of equipment for second lieutenants, but that didn't mean anything. Up to this point in our career everything has been scheduled to the split second—and what of it? We have moved with a godlike disregard for time and space—blocked at crossroads by other outfits, also traveling on split-

second time-table—stymied by the indifference of railroad officials, also supposed to own watches—and when our schedules mentioned that we would clear such and such a point at 10:30 A.M. we'd find ourselves somewhere near it at 4 in the afternoon. But here was something different. We rolled into the Polygon—the artillery loading station—shortly after midnight, moved up a ramp and unhitched. Wonder of wonders, a train was waiting—a string of flats and Chevaux-Huits so arranged that each carriage was within a few feet of the car that was to take it northward.

Col. Hackett, as always, doing enough manual labor for three second-class privates, was ranging up and down the platform exhorting a crew that he seemed to have perfected in the loading industry during the afternoon. He passed the word that men, horses and material would have to be stowed and ready to travel in thirty minutes; a bit of optimism that subordinates took without comment but with much thought. In twenty minutes by the clock the whistles shrilled, the startled officers made a flying connection with the handles on their compartment and the carnival was in motion.

The secret of the thing was in the efficiency of the directing crew. One man stood over each section while the cannoneers drew piece and caisson on to the flats assigned to them. In less than five minutes all the carriages had been pushed aboard and blocked and tied with the paulins over them.

Next these sublimated canvas men moved on to the Chevaux-Huits and made rapid assignments—a team and its drivers to one car, other personnel of the same section to an adjacent car. The horses, dumb as always, did not quarrel when they were led

up the ramps and into their moving stalls. The mules, apparently from Missouri, showed no zeal for leaving Besançon. Universally they stuck their heads through the doors and balked.

This seemed to be the unforeseen element that would disrupt our present schedule as all other schedules had been disrupted. But here, too, experience had brought efficiency. Talented loaders, two abreast, would dash up the runways, catching the unsuspecting mule in the rump. With his hind legs in the air the animal never thought of protesting until he had been somersaulted into the car. After that it was too late.

Apparently we had the right of way out of Besançon. The speed was not much faster than a walk at any time and quite a bit less than that on the upgrades. But we went steadily forward. We clattered through unlighted stations and through forests where thick trees pressed down on the tracks like the walls of a tunnel. And we froze by inches as we tried vainly to sleep.

Shortly after dawn we drew up on a siding at Vesoul to water and feed. The order was passed along that the equipment henceforward would include tin hats and gas masks and that the men would avoid showing themselves outside of the cars in which they were riding. The Gothas had been active, it was said, and they would undoubtedly have bombs to waste on trains that they suspected of carrying troops.

At Epinal, later in the day, we heard the rising and falling cadence of unsynchronized motors and high above the town we saw the advertised aëroplane. It was all alone and about ten thousand feet up. An anti-aircraft battery was working on it and the sound

of the fire recalled Valdahon on an active afternoon.

Puffballs of shrapnel were appearing miraculously in the sky beneath the plane—little clouds that ranged themselves in a line across the blue. It looked as though the plane must presently give up the struggle and come tumbling to the earth. But it didn't. It soared about calmly indifferent to the activity below and then turned about and streaked northward.

According to the book the function of anti-aircraft guns is to keep the enemy avion well up out of observing range rather than to bring it down. That sounds like a hindsight observation, not to say raspberry. If the Epinal battery is any sample, the shooting of the anti-aircraft artillery is nothing to write home about.

The landscape gave more and more hint of war as we proceeded north—not so much in actual wreckage as in the abandoned look of farm land and vineyard. Lack of man power rather than enemy activity had put its impress on the countryside.

Now and then as the afternoon wore on we passed barbed wire entanglements stretching without seeming purpose through woods and along roads. Probably most of this wire was strung out during the early days of the war as a precaution against a possible break in the lines up around Nancy.

Nancy itself showed fewer ravages than we had expected. It proved to be a large and teeming city with smoking chimneys and a hurried life in the streets. But here and there—even in its metropolitan district one caught an occasional glimpse of wrecked walls and eloquent rock piles. Air bombs, apparently, have done most of the damage in this neighborhood although some of the walls show unmistakable signs of shell fragments.

We made only a short stop here and went out of the town into a region of bare fields crossed with trenches and patterned with stagnant pools. Alongside the right of way just out of Nancy is a sign advertising the Fifty-seven Varieties of Mr. Heinz. Most of us could have wept when we left it behind.

An hour or so later we drew into the yards on the south side of Toul.

We have heard a lot about Toul because of its identification with the initial activities of the American army in France and it lived up to its advance notices. It seems to have been given over in its entirety to the Americans. American troops were in pup-tent camp all along the railroad. There were parks of American artillery in the fields, and even in the rapidly settling twilight it was evident that the personnel of these outfits was thoroughly seasoned.

There was no way of telling, of course, where the men had come from. They themselves probably did not know whither they would be bound when orders should come for them to pull out of the Toul camps. But one may guess that a concentration is going on at this point. And from the look of men and material the object of the concentration is no longer mere training.

It began to rain while we were halted in the yards—a cold, steady rain with a north wind behind it. And with the coming of the storm the town faded into the black. Not a glimmer of light was to be seen across the broad expanse of it. One was barely conscious of the station as we clattered through it. Our last, and probably our most vivid, impression was the gaunt outline of a ruined building against the blackening sky.

This is being written at Foug, a town on the Meuse

north of Toul. Half of the brigade is to be detrained here. The other half goes on to Pagny-sûr-Meuse. Thence by carriages to Calvary.

A Night with the Chef de Gare

Foug, *August 24, Morning.*—Fever still running. Supply of raw eggs and cognac negligible.

I have been assigned to look after the destinies of such batteries and trains as may arrive here between now and several hours hence. The official title appertaining to my position is "detraining officer" and the post of command of the detraining officer is a bale of hay on the unloading platform. It has been raining ever since our arrival here and baled hay is scant protection.

So on the advice of Kent Hunter, whom I relieved, I came into this station and stole the desk on which I am writing from a lieutenant of artillery—French army—who is here acting as a *marechal militaire.*

Besides the *marechal* four strange bits of cinema inhabit la gare.

There are a telegraph operator, a *chef de gare*, an assistant *chef de gare*, and an assistant to the assistant.

The operator is a genial soul with a smile and a quick wit. He wears overalls with a wide braid down the side.

The *chef de gare* is fully costumed as befits the dignity of his position, but one is conscious at first only of his buttons. If the war ever ends he can make his fortune selling his coat, for every branch of the service of France from aviation to engineers has contributed something to his equipment. And the crowned brass button of the German army adorns his blouse tails. These buttons, one is presently

aware, are attached to a nondescript blue uniform. He stares at me over his sad mustachios as if he half suspects me of being a German spy.

The assistant stands concealed behind a voice. His is the largest voice in France. It fills the surrounding countryside with reverberations, rattles such windows as aren't rattling from other causes, and disturbs the rest of engine drivers innumerable. His garb is the unsalvageable portion of a wrecked infantry uniform . . . all except the ribbon of the *medaille militaire*. That stands out with his voice and a very villainous face among his chief assets.

He has a critical eye, this lad. There probably would be a story in him if he could be got to talk of his experience here at war's back door—of the men he has seen go in and the men he has seen go out. He has a critical eye and seems to be none too well pleased with us, an attitude which may be caused by his military instinct or perhaps by the fact that we are keeping him from sleep. As a station porter he is not so much.

As he moves about one becomes aware of his lovely pants which in another and better day probably graced the person of the fattest lad in the French forces. They seem to be continually on the verge of falling off. That they somehow contrive to preserve his dubious modesty must be due to that Providence which has looked out for the destinies of France since the dark winter of 1914.

The fourth character is a short, fat one. His attire is similar to that of number three although his buttons are less numerous and far less exciting. If his expression is any indication he wouldn't give a thin centime for the prospects of the world.

So the stage is set. The characters are in motion

under the kerosene lamps. The smells of *vin rouge*, fruit, leather, and engine oil combine to give the piece its atmosphere.

A bell rings.

The telegraph operator picks up the dumb-bell of a telephone and answers:

"Allo! Allo! I am listening. . . ."

He receives his message, writes it on a pad, sits down, stands up, answers another telephone.

Another bell rings.

The Paris express is on the way.

Another bell rings.

Another bell rings.

Tape begins to wind out of a telegraph ticker alongside the desk and the halting stutter of a *dépêche* is added to the din.

The operator looks helpless. Then he smiles.

The bells continue to ring but he sits down calmly and begins to read the message on the tape. After all one can do only one thing at a time.

An American lieutenant comes in seeking shelter for his horse.

"A horse," repeats the *chef de gare*. "Bring him in."

Of course, bring him in. Why leave a horse out in the rain when there is a roof on the waiting room? The horse refuses to squeeze himself through the door. The entire station personnel aided by one detraining officer seeks to convince the horse that no one means harm to our Nell. The horse remains a skeptic. Eventually he is led around the station, across the tracks and tied under a tin roof projecting beyond a freight platform. If nobody backs an en-

gine on to that siding before morning the horse probably will be safe.

The lieutenant thanks everybody wearily. He goes to bed on a chicken crate in the baggage room with a paulin for a covering. The occasional discussion of the matter by the chickens might disturb many a soldier. But not this lad. The stamp of the Front is on him—a weariness of spirit that long ago has made him noise-proof. He is streaked with mud from his collar ornaments to his spurs and soaking wet from waist to ankles. He is snoring like a man under ether.

The operator calls Pagny—BG, BG, BG,—for five minutes. . . . No answer.

"Asleep," observes the detraining officer in his fragmentary French.

"Always asleep," declares the operator out of his greater experience. Four bells unlimber for action.

Enters an American medical lieutenant. Apparently he came originally from Indiana. Just now he comes from the Front, but the character of Indiana is still more noticeable in him than the impress of the veteran. He has a bedding roll, weight sixty pounds, and "light hand baggage" weight seventy-five pounds.

He wishes to go to Blois.

"Monsoor," he hails through the ticket window, momentarily drowning the bells, "monsoor, je desiree to go to Bloo-wah, tout suite!" He doesn't make much progress so he shouts his message in a louder voice. Still the *chef de gare* seems unable to understand.

The detraining officer enlists as an interpreter. His interpretation consists principally in repeating

Blois as something like blah. The telegraph operator, forgetful of his telephones and ticker, joins in the conversation and eventually begins to make head and tail of it. He finds Blois on a tattered map and traces a routing. The way, it appears, lies through Paris.

But Monsieur le lieutenant doesn't want to go that way particularly. He has a ticket worth a couple of francs from Gray to some other town in that neighborhood and he insists on having a route planned for him that will permit the salvaging of this scrap of mileage.

Four bells ring. A ticker ticks. An octagonal wheeled train bumps out of the dark from the south and into the dark to the north. The lieutenant sniffs and wonders audibly if the smell in the baggage room might be mustard gas. It might, of course, be mustard gas. It might be anything. But the operator doesn't think it is mustard gas. Noxious perhaps, but not mustard gas.

The operator finds the route and the tariff sheets. It is a long process but so is the night and he doesn't care much about the bells anyway.

The altered course of the lieutenant's voyage will save the ticket but will lose the price in added mileage. The lieutenant decides that he will go the first way, that he will go the second way, that he will go the first way, that he will go the second way, that he will go the first way, that he will take the first train west, that he will take the first train south and east and meet the express, that he will express his baggage, that he will carry his baggage, that he will express half of it, that he doesn't know what he will do with his baggage, that he probably will lose it anyway, that he will leave on the first troop train starting down from the Front tout de suite. . . . !

Out in the yards a train of empties is clattering into motion. An engine whistles and castanet wheels begin to beat out a fandango. The operator puts his head out of the window, blows a shrieking signal and stops the procession. He instructs the engineer to put the lieutenant off at the station platform in Commercy. The lieutenant clambers aboard. The whistles shriek, a nasal horn sounds, the wheels bump.

And presently there is blessed silence save for the jangling of four bells. The operator is back at his key.

"BG BG BG——"

"Always the same. . . . They never answer . . . *jamais.*"

The assistant with the voice is bellowing at some doughboys in the baggage room. They can't make out what he is saying and so continue to sleep undisturbed.

Silence . . . and then an ominous sound out of the black sky . . . a rising and falling moan that at first is the wailing of a distant banshee and then is a surf-like roar, close at hand and terrible.

The *chef de gare* extinguishes the lone light. He shouts a warning through the door of the baggage room and cursing shadows stampede for the cellar.

The operator is still at his key. Still trying to raise BG. The *marechal militaire*, asleep on a row of chairs in a corner of the office, grunts and turns over without awakening.

Up in the sky the unseen danger travels back and forth—seeking—seeking.

In the dim light that comes through the rain-

streaked window looking out over the tracks one can see the figure of the *chef de gare* moving calmly through a mysterious rite. His right arm is swinging backward and forward and one is aware after a time that he is pulling on a string.

"*Ici*," calls the operator and he leads the way out on to the station platform. He points through the blackness across the trackage and there, so far away as to be nearly invisible, two green lanterns and a red one are swinging back and forth.

Even as he points there is a terrific blast—an explosion that jars the earth for miles and fills the sky with a dull red flash. Two more blasts echo the first. Follows the sound of Mercedes engines in a diminuendo-crescendo that rumbles overhead and then fades away in the direction of the German lines.

The *chef de gare* lights his lamps again and points proudly to the string with which he has been waving the three lanterns of his decoy station a full kilometer away from the unloading platforms. . . .

Four bells ring.

The ticker sputters . . . The tape unwinds. . . . The men of the cinema are back at their desks. It is all part of the night's work. . . .

"BG, BG."

So ends a night of delirium—the first delirium of recent date that seems to have an existence apart from the ache of my legs. Lieutenant Duffy has gone on somewhere to tend to his own kettle of fish and the raw-egg cognac diet has been discontinued.

The *marechal militaire* contributed a glass of Sauterne this morning, but he had no raw eggs and I don't suppose I could have looked them in the face if he had offered them. The fever is still present; but

despite frequent wetting as the batteries pulled in during the night, it seems to be no higher than it was when we left Besançon. I haven't slept since we left Valdahon but prospects are getting better.

The last battery hitched up and rolled down the runway this morning and I am relieved. I have distributed the last of my road maps and billeting orders to Lieut. Erickson, who has a detail of sick, aged and dying horses. Heaven be with him for a brave warrior.

I reported to Gen. Todd and got much praise from Major Roth, his adjutant, for my skill in passing out maps to homing artillerymen. It seems that I didn't make a single mistake. If Battery D arrived I gave the battery commander a map marked Battery D. Similarly with E and F and the rest of them and thanks to an uncanny talent for matching the alphabet I set them all on proper roads. To-morrow I may find myself recommended for the D.S.C.

In the meantime I wait breakfast which some sad-faced menial is compiling in the kitchen of the general's billet. Sleep might be a more immediate necessity but I have a premonition that in the army from now on one had better gather his ros-bif while he may.

Sweet lady, how tired I am.

A Night Picture

FOUG, *August 24, Evening.*—Failed in a spirited attempt to attach myself to brigade headquarters and get an automobile ride to the Front. The battery has been yearning for me and numerous of the official yearners have been looking for my body under the bale of hay that last night was my post of command. Now I am waiting here on the ridge that

tops the town, once more a part of the battery column.

The rain has stopped. The sun has gone down. We are waiting only for twilight to start our march into the St. Mihiel sector.

Spear-point poplars give us ample defilade from above but it seems that the trees are thinner as one progresses over the hill.

A beautiful place, this. The valley of the Meuse is spread out in front of us, green shading to blue with a cloud-flecked river down the center of it. A church bell is ringing. . . . The Angelus . . . In the sodden road the horses stir uneasily. Cannon rim the heights for miles. A pretty picture for a new Millet.

"Drivers and Cannoneers . . . Mount!"

"From this point on, men, there will be no smoking."

Somebody in this cavalcade must have known where we were going. We could hardly have made it haphazardly—just diving off into the misty light of valley and down and wandering like a lost circus until we found a suitable place to tie the horses. But whatever the extent of this knowledge it was not shared with the executives or the men.

The colonel came along to inspect us and to listen attentively but with a sad shake of his head to a joke or two. Then he climbed into his car and went away ahead of us while we turned away to the North and East approaching that eerie mystery which is the Front.

Night came—a night with a moon in it. And the valleys seemed to be afloat with moonlight from rim rock to rim rock. As we progressed butte-like hills

bulked out of the shallows and buttressed escarpments hemmed us in. The scene was a monotone of blue that deepened with the distance and was almost white in the foregrounds. And through it rattled our circus, as incongruous a detail as ever a mad artist introduced into a painted picture.

Along the road here and there we passed ammunition dumps—little square patches with dark paulins over them. And now and again we peered through the scintillant mist to see piles of barbed wire, piles of sixty-centimeter railroad track, piles of timber, piles of elephant iron—food for Moloch.

The haze softened the outline of these interminable junk heaps and blended their shadows into a pattern that harmonized with the prodigal beauty of the countryside—and yet one kept wondering how the middle aisle of Notre Dame would look with melanite and wheels and iron scattered in the shadows of the high arches.

The batteries went on in silence. Silence was by command but everyone in the column knew that orders were unnecessary. The men had drawn into themselves and were staring into the mystery ahead —each with his own eyes.

One felt immediately with the fall of twilight that "enemy ears were listening." No one knew how far away the Front might be—or how near. Perhaps over the next ridge was a listening post with connections straight to Berlin. Perhaps even now spies were moving out there in the mists. Perhaps the Gothas would come to sweep the road—sure of a target now, since all the road was full. Carriage interval was spaced to twenty-five meters and the column spread out endlessly, while anxious lieutenants rode back and forth to make sure that it stayed spread.

Then a wail in the night and a flame in the sky and a rumble underfoot.

Frantic horses stepped into their traces and milled about in an effort to throw off the postilions who guided them. Startled men stood up on caisson dashes prepared to jump.

At which critical moment a train came hurtling by on an unseen narrow-gauge that paralleled the road. A two-stacked locomotive was drawing it and each stack was throwing a Vesuvius of sparks into the sky.

The cheerful engine crew leaned out of the little cab and bawled riotous greeting to the coy cannoneers who had felt so keenly the need for silence and decorum. And very vocal trainmen paused from their interesting work with brakes and such to shout criticism of our interval and hopes that our luck would be better than our technique seemed to warrant.

The going was no less mysterious after the train had clattered out of sight around a bend. And silence was maintained as hitherto. But somehow the war seemed to have gone on and left us flat. It was still somewhere in the future—this widely discussed Front. And for the nonce one could remember that he had not eaten recently and that he was getting hungry.

Doughnuts

Boucq, *August 25.*—The chief recollection of our going up is the home-iness of two Y.M.C.A. doughnuts that came unexpectedly out of the night and changed the whole atmosphere of a lonely journey. There is quite a halo clinging to the festive doughnut and an abundant philosophy totally removed from its status as food. It is more American than the

Star-Spangled Banner . . . more poignantly a reminder of the life behind us than "Just a Song at Twilight." A thousand associations are called up by it—a thousand sentiments aroused in breasts that might be immune to ballads about Home and Mother.

One bite—there arise visions of Grandma's kitchen and a small boy with his hand in the brown stone crock. There were always doughnuts at Grandma's and nearly always a small boy.

Two bites—Thompson's after the "bulldog" of the *Inter-Ocean* had been put to bed. . . . The doughnuts are piled in a great pyramid on the marble counter. A waiter in a spotless jacket is drawing "Thompson Coffee—Take Home a Can—Forty Cents" for Big Bob Maxwell. Four crullers hang like rings on Bob's brawny forefinger. . . . Other crullers on the broad arms of the chairs along the glistening white wall mark the whereabouts of the rest of the copy desk.

Three bites—the hasty breakfasts on the *Journal*—a sleepy office boy with a pot of coffee in one hand and the change out of a quarter in the other. . . . Doughnuts, coffee, and fifteen cents change and only a franc and twenty-five centimes to start out with. Even in a vision it seems impossible. . . . Election nights on the *Houston Post* . . . Murder trials, four eleven fires, riots. . . . Wherever there has been excitement there have been doughnuts. It is only natural that we should find them here within sound of the heavies and within reach of Gerry's shells.

We were winding in our attenuated file through a nameless, shapeless village in the streets of which the blue twilight had become purple and black. Traces

of the recent rain still dripped from the eaves of stone barns and splashed dismally in tar-like pools at the side of the road.

The head of the column had halted at a cross road. The first section of our platoon was abreast of a white crucifix, the last carriage opposite a café: "Biere Arlen—Vins et Liqueurs." The horses nervously pawed at the cobbled pavement as rather soiled children chattered endearments at them in high keyed French. The scene was typical of France and for every cannoneer in that long defile there was a world of loneliness in it.

There came the chugging of a motorcycle, and a side car carefully picked its way up the free side of the road. In the side car sat Major Beckett holding —could it be possible?—a double handful of doughnuts.

As he passed by he held a golden ring aloft—a hungry lieutenant leaned sideways in his saddle and made a quick stab with his left hand.

"Drivers and Cannoneers . . . Mount! Forr'd! Yoh!"

The silent caravan moved on its clanking way again. The lieutenant, forgetting ten days of liquid diet, set his teeth into a bit of pastry that melted on his furry tongue. The loneliness of the scene, apparently, had been for the most part in the imagination. Not in vain had been his experience in the spearing of brass rings on an American merry-go-round ages and ages ago. . . .

. . . . . .

We passed through Boucq. We turned into a tunnel of trees and so came to the Foret de la Reine.

Somebody had marked out our territory along one of the fire lanes but he must have come in daylight

to do it. At 4 o'clock in the morning a dense wood is darker than the mind of Jack Johnson and map coördinates are not marked on the road crossings.

We pulled up along one of the lanes and unhitched. The drivers led out and followed a guide to water. The officers of the column did not see them again. When they came back it was by another lane and they established their picket lines deep in the shrubbery.

The cannoneers dropped stiffly from limbers and caissons and promptly dissolved into the gloom. Five minutes after the command to halt had been given the wood was silent and the soldiers were gone. Wherever a man could find a place to throw himself under a bush he threw himself—with or without a blanket. And presumably he went immediately into a sleep so deep that dynamite could not have aroused him. The unfortunate part of this procedure was that the officers were late in following suit.

There came presently an inspector.

"You can't leave those carriages so far out on the road," he declared. "This forest is under constant aëroplane observation and you'll be shelled out if you're seen here. Roll the guns into the ditch and cover them with leaves. You'll have to get the fourgons back under the trees."

He rode away. No skin off of his nose whether or not the wheeled material was moved. He had stated a simple proposition in language so clear that even artillery lieutenants might be expected to understand it.

But what to do?

One needed man-power to clear underbrush sufficiently to permit the passage of a fourgon. Even the guns that were to be disposed of so neatly in the

ditch would never get there under their own steam.

The old fever was burning again and the effect of the doughnuts had worn off. One could not but envy the men sprawled out there in the dark.

Capt. Wheeler shouted a loud rallying cry. The woods echoed to his inspiring voice. But there came no answering sound from the vasty silences. The cannoneers, poor lads, were now in the depths of a gold-brick trance. The captain shouted and echo flung back the raspberry.

So we turned in—Lieut. Stier, Lieut. Dunham, the captain, a couple of peevish sergeants and myself—to get our circus out of the way before dawn. It was useless to search the woods for men. They knew better than to sleep near the road where they might be stepped upon by a horse or a major general. By now they were far gone.

Had they known that the officers were being put to this manual labor, undoubtedly they would have risen from their bushes en masse and leaped energetically to the wheels of the waiting carriages. They would have been appalled at the thought of a lieutenant—even a second lieutenant—doing useful work. But what the eye does not see the heart does not get het up about. So they slept and we sweated. By 6 o'clock the white road stood clear and the jolly old vehicles were well out of photograph range.

At a fire lane crossing Con Turner was stirring up the morning coffee. A bedraggled work detail sat down on a log near the rolling kitchen and waited for it yearningly.

It was about three days ago, it seems to me, that Lieut. Duffy was matching nickels with himself to make a guess whether or not I would live to see Besançon. There seem to be several ways of treating Spanish influenza.

The Clans Are Gathering

Echelon

Foret de la Reine, *August 26.*—We are waiting in echelon—in a position well behind the lines—a position from which we shall presently move forward.

The Boche suspects our presence. He has been moving about ever since we crawled beneath our camouflage on the dismal morning of our arrival.

It has been very interesting—and pastoral—here. Now and then a shell drops near us, a heavy which groans rather than roars as it piles up a black cloud above the woods. Only the heavies and the aërial bombs get back this far but there are enough of both of them to satisfy the most critical taste. Sometimes we can hear a barrage. It is like the roll of summer thunder or the off stage rumbling of kettle drums.

Five or six times a day the inquisitive Germans and the French or Americans fight machine gun battles in the air high above our heads. We have not seen a plane fall yet, but our field of view is limited. Once the allies in front of us—we do not know for sure yet whether we are behind French or Americans—put up a barrage against a squadron of five bombing planes. It was exciting while it lasted but the Germans got away.

We are quartered in a woods dense enough to surprise those of us whose school-day geographies had educated in the belief that France is a treeless country. Our pup tents are pitched in arbors. Our

picket lines are almost lost in underbrush. Lieut. Tomlin has built a tree house well above the mossy floor of the woods and here, listening to the songs of cuckoos and other appropriate birds we spend our days in a half slumber.

The horses are watered only at night. By day they are kept hidden with the men. They seem to enjoy the life and fight and bite and kick just as wholesomely as they did in the stables at Valdahon. Whenever one of them attempts to kick all his companions off the picket line some driver wakes up long enough to howl "Quit that, you nut." But nobody seems to think that other remedial measures are necessary. If a horse has a grievance and settles it for himself, fair enough . . . The war is being fought to make the world safe for democracy, not to satisfy the grudges of horses.

The men spend their time when they are not asleep pounding two-franc pieces into finger rings. So far as they are concerned the jolly old war is looking up a bit—no drills, short fatigue details, no paper on which an uneasy conscience might force one to write letters home, nothing to do and a sunlit forest to do it in. This is Acadia with its murmuring pines and its what-not. And if somewhere men are fighting in muddy trenches that's their hard luck.

A trainload of wounded passed us yesterday on the way down from the Front—the railroad winds through the woods to our right and occasionally we get up enough energy to walk over and see the engines go by. A truckload of grave diggers went up via the road to our left not long afterward. It is by a series of pictures such as these that we visualize the presence of the war. We have heard nothing of

what's going on in the world since our arrival here. Save for the backwash of battle there is nothing to indicate that we are here on any business more serious than picnicking.

But the heavies just ahead of us bark a bit. Rockets arch the sky to the north. . . . The tomtoms of the barrage come rumbling back to us. And in the morning the Red Cross trains pass by in the chill wet dawn.

We had a visitor yesterday—Lieut. —— who was with F Battery in Logan. He left Texas about the time that most of us were being detached for instruction at Fort Sill and it turns out that he has been over here most of the time since.

He found us through official connections with G.H.Q. for Lieut. —— is now with the graves registration service and it is only proper that a grave digger should know the whereabouts of his prospective customers. He has become thin and aged in his pleasant work and somewhat introspective although his good humor has not deserted him.

He told us many sprightly anecdotes of the war—particularly of the war as he found it around Château-Thierry. . . .

"They say it was a shocking sight after the field was won . . ."

"Dead Krauts and dead Yanks all over the place," the lieutenant recalled petulantly. "And not half enough men for the job of putting them away decently. They just worked us to death.

"It was pretty warm out there in the sun, if you remember. And there were some of them we didn't get to for nearly a week. A corpse should never be left around in the sun. It just plumb spoils.

"About the end of the week the decedents were all swelled up and gassy and it was certainly a rotten job putting them away.

"You get used to it after while though. You put on your gas mask and stick the corpse in the belly with a bayonet. That lets the gas out so that you can roll him into a normal grave. . . ."

He imparted this information not as a trade secret but as a bit of interesting and useful knowledge. He added, however, that with the approach of cold weather bodies might be expected to "keep" longer without attention.

Another intriguing story comes from the other side of the road to our right where the plain of the Wœvre goes forward in search of its hills.

There is a pleasant bit of scenery there where the fire lane empties into the highway. A little lake, blue as cobalt glass—and as smooth—spreads out over the green and not far from it in a cool garden of shrubbery is an ancient monastery.

It is no longer occupied by monks. Whether it is one of the abbeys despoiled by the revolutionists or merely a relic of the more recent anti-clerical tendencies in French politics no one in these parts seems to know. At any rate its present use is as a hospital and the men quicken their steps when they have to pass it. The M.P. on the road to Boucq passed on the story which is verified by Lieut. Duffy and others of our own medical corps.

Some months ago the First Division was in the line up north of this place and was hauled out for duty on the Marne. The movement was detected and all this neighborhood was bombarded with gas-shells—mustard.

Mustard—as we are learning—is not properly a gas at all but a liquid which clings to shrubs and grass and trees and spreads out in ruts and pockets in the roads. When the sun hits it it evaporates lazily and spreads a deadly mist over the landscape—a mist that has an affinity for moisture such as is always present in human hair, under human armpits or between human legs.

A fog of it lingered in a valley about ten kilos northwest of Boucq at the time that the First Division was marching back. A whole company got into it before the presence of gas was suspected.

"They filled that hospital with them," the M.P. says. "Every man jack of 'em was in a bad way. . . . They had to castrate forty-seven of 'em. . . . God knows what happened to the others after they moved 'em back to the base hospitals. . . ."

The blacksmith shop is beneath a spreading hazelnut bush. The clang of iron on iron echoes through the little forest and sets the birds to singing.

The smith is a slim good-looking lad who wears his gas mask on his back. He is anything but the popular conception of what a blacksmith should be—and he shoes more horses in a day than would come to the village smithy in a week.

The horses don't understand him yet. They are beginning to respond to rein and spur, but English is still a mystery to them.

"*Allez!*" he calls. They snort a reluctant assent and move over.

Sad Death of Pvt. McAllister

Foret de la Reine, *August 27.*—Battery D lost a man from the train on the way up here fom Besan-

çon. A wild horse broke his halter, dived under the cross rope and ran amuck. Pvt. McAllister offered the next barrier to his progress so he thrust a quick pair of heels into Mr. McAllister's chest. Pvt. McAllister went out through the side door into the night and thereafter the battery had to get along as best it could without him.

Forty kilometers farther along the route a pale, battered youth crawled over the tops of the box cars and succeeded in getting the train stopped. Major White sent telegrams back directing that searching parties be sent out to look for the corpse and see that it be given fitting interment. The troop train moved on

Capt. Eddie Gould, commanding B battery reported a strange story at the Battalion mess yesterday.

"I don't understand these French," he declared. "A man from Battery D got kicked off the train coming up here. Eighteen hours later we came by and his body was still lying alongside the track . . . close to a big town, too. There's no excuse for that sort of negligence. We wouldn't allow a wounded dog to lie eighteen hours alongside a railroad track. We wouldn't allow . . ." And much more to the same effect.

The corpse reported for duty last night. A bedraggled soldier with a blood-caked gas mask staggered up to Lieut. Plantz and saluted.

"Sir," he said, "my name's McAllister. I have the first sergeant's permission to say that I didn't go A.W.O.L. A bloody horse kicked me out of the car. I kinda got hurt and stayed in the ditch all night, but I flagged a troop train this morning and came in. . . .

"And, and, lieutenant, I'm sorry about it, but I couldn't help it. I—sure tried to take care of it, but I didn't know the horse was going to boot me. . . . And I'll pay you for it, lieutenant, but I smashed the globe on your flash light."

. . . . . .

Battery E's horse detail is on the wrong road. We know the detail belongs to Battery E because a brass-lunged corporal insists on announcing it every two or three minutes to the impatient world. We know it is the wrong road because it is our own road and Battery E has no business there.

It is raining. The sound is intensified by the rustling of wet leaves. Battery E's horses are slopping along in the mud.

Voices in the night:

"This here is the wrong road."

"This is a hell of a time to be findin' it out."

" 'Tain't my fault. . . . Fall down an' break your damn neck, you crazy crowbait." (This kindly suggestion is probably offered to a horse.)

"Hell I wish't I'd stayed a doughboy. . . . Join the artillery an' ride!"

There is an interruption in the way of a splash—a sticky, liquid snapping as of feet being lifted out of wet clay—and many curses.

"Ride—an' all I gotta do is take care o' four o' these damn skates. *Allez!* You fool! *Allez!*"

Another voice: "Put out that light, you God-forgotten idiot. . . . Put out that light or I'll shoot it out!"

Pained answer: "This ain't no light. It's a white horse."

"Join the artillery an' ride! An I've walked six

kilometers to-night to give four o' these Wop skates a drink."

The old influenza seems to have withered away. It probably died of ennui. The pains have gone out of my legs and I am now developing an itching foot. There is an epidemic of that malady abroad. The restlessness is developing despite this simple life. Most of us feel that we ought to be allowed to see the Front, now that we have come all this distance to get a look at it.

Lieut. Morrell Tomlin is my neighbor in sleeping quarters and he holds the pessimistic view that we'll still be here vegetating when peace is declared. He is in charge of the echelon and has elaborate plans for chopping down some trees and building permanent winter quarters for his interesting steeds.

Tomlin is a bit older than the rest of us and something of the story-book soldier.

His not to reason why—his but to take his orders and ask no questions. Long experience has given him the key to a pleasant life in the army: Take things as they come.

"I've been trying to get into a war since the Wounded Knee Massacre," he told me yesterday. "I was just a kid then but I ran away from home and tried to enlist. But by the time I found a recruiting sergeant who would take me all the Indians had decided to behave themselves.

"It's always been like that. The excitement just naturally dies out when I come around. . . . And you watch and see. It will be just the same here. I never have any luck.

"I was in the Guard when the Spanish American war came along. I got as far as Chickamauga Park. I didn't even get typhoid.

"I wanted to go to the Philippines and got as far as Omaha. I was down on the border with the cavalry when Pershing went into Mexico and the closest I got to a battle was the Austin hike.

"I have a hunch I can stop this war any time I want to just by walking up to the front lines. The Krauts will say: 'Oh, lookee! Here comes Tomlin'—and they'll call it a day and go home. . . ."

Well maybe he's right. Certainly it doesn't look as if the lads up ahead were ever going to cry out for help from us. We haven't drilled for a week or so. In another couple of months most of us will have forgotten how to lay a gun. If they keep us here long enough the A.E.F. will give us a vote of thanks and send us home in self-defense.

We have progressed a little, however. Phil Newman was over to-day for a while with the glad tidings that we are somewhere in the vicinity of the apex of the St. Mihiel salient. Directly in front of us is a big butte called Mont Sec a natural fort that has been strengthened day in day out since 1914. It commands the Wœvre plains and is said to be impregnable.

Now that sounds like authentic news. What more natural than that we should receive our baptism of fire while we bump our heads against an impregnable hill?

Lieut. Hobart Lawton of F battery showed quite a lot of interest in the report. He came to the outfit from the artillery school at Saumur and before that he was a sergeant in the 102nd F.A. He says that they held down a position in the line under Mont Sec for several months—somewhere near Seichprey.

"I had a hunch we were going in around Mont Sec," he said. "I have never been down here before

but the road out of Foug looked familiar. Probably the idea of this attack is to straighten out the St. Mihiel salient.

"If that's true it would explain all the heavy guns that have been going up by railroad. The only way we'll ever get past Mont Sec is to blow it down. The Krauts have been planting artillery behind that hill for four years—most of it in dead space for everything but howitzers and its the toughest point in this part of the line."

Well cheerio! It's a comfort to know that we have a man's size job cut out for us. We'd probably go nutty if we were shoved into one of those sectors where you fire one shot every three or four weeks.

Styles in hair cuts change. Yesterday bangs or pompadours were the source of much concern to their proud owners. To-day shaven tops are the order—polls as smooth as a baby's, and as funny. Hair became unpopular during our first day in the zone of mustard gas. The battery barber set up his shop on the trail of the fourth piece and started upon a busy program.

The officers approached the inevitable gradually. It is one thing to get one's hair cut, quite another to expose to a critical world the strange and ungodly bumps that previously lay concealed in all their hideousness beneath a protecting thatch.

Baldness is no crime provided it is shapely baldness. There is beauty in the hairless billiard ball. But it is difficult to maintain a dignified demeanor beneath a dozen or more knob-like bulges.

But one day the lambs came in to be shorn. Naked skulls, white and glistening, stood forth above roughened necks and wind-burned faces like mileposts to mark the progress of the clippers. Tin hats slide

unopposed down over ears which once they despaired of protecting. Combs have been put away and the woods are bristling with discarded hair brushes. No longer do we fear the agile cootie and the insidious yellow-cross gas. But for all that we are looking forward to Christmas time when we'll have enough wool to part again.

One of the dental surgeons contributed to the festivities to-day. He cut the hair of his assistant with a pair of tinner's shears. The result will necessitate another shaven poll. Better nakedness than some brands of clothes.

The Chaplain

Foret de la Reine, *August 28.*—A chaplain is a puzzlesome sort of soul. What good is he?

In some regiments the chaplain is the last remaining link between war and civilization—a bit of home dressed up in a uniform. In ours he is a memory, a face at the mess table, a whining voice droning at public exercises, an empty pated authority on all subjects between abbacus and xylophone.

This morning a horse died. . . . A good old nag who had done his work patiently and well, questioning no order and bragging none about his accomplishments. He got some sort of kink in his complicated innards and left the service of the United States honorably and without protest.

"Too good a horse to go without proper burial," observed Capt. Wheeler. "Where is the chaplain?"

"Where indeed?" sighed the major.

"In bed," hazarded the practical minded adjutant.

"Operator!" bawled the captain. "Get regimental on the phone and tell the chaplain that there has been a death in Battery A."

Half an hour thereafter, the chaplain came plodding up the road through the rain.

"Right through the woods," directed the captain brusquely.

"I never knew anyone was ill," apologized the chaplain.

"That's because you never came around to find out," explained the B.C. "Here, take this with you. You may find it useful." And he extended a shovel.

The chaplain shouldered it and departed for the picket line. That was the last seen of him.

Two hours later: The chaplain has just come around with a block of writing paper. He is getting acquainted with Battery A, so in a small way the dead horse has accomplished some good.

He is talking now to Lieut. Tomlin who is preparing for the burial of another steed.

Chaplain (standing guardedly on a mid-ground between unholy suspicion and holy anger): Another horse died?

Tomlin: Yep. . . . Ninth section drivers, fall in with your spades.

Chaplain: I'm beginning to notice that the equine mortality rate is pretty high in this battery. One yesterday and one to-day.

Tomlin: I didn't see you around here praying for either one of them.

A pause.

Chaplain: Do you know, somebody called me up about that horse this morning. (Here a painful inflection gives color to the conversation.) I was told that there had been a death and I supposed it to be one of our dear boys and I hurried right up here.

Tomlin: You weren't perspiring much when you got here.

Chaplain: I don't perspire a great deal in wet weather. But I hurried right over. Indeed I did.

Tomlin: I'm glad to hear that. For a moment, you know, I misjudged you.

Chaplain: It was a cruel sort of jest. Some day, perhaps, there might be a real death and I'd think it was a joke and wouldn't hurry.

Tomlin: And that would make the corpse sore as the devil.

Chaplain: I think the matter should be investigated.

Tomlin: So do I. . . . Ninth section.—Fall in!

What good is a chaplain? All the good in the world if he fits but it seems safe to guess that a leader in a man's world ought to be a man.

Back home we had a sky-pilot who in civil life had been a brakeman. His sole object in getting into the army was to hook on to a larger salary. He was one of the foulest-mouthed men in the regiment, a blustering, swaggering hoodlum—and the men despised him.

In a way he was a man's man. He was hard-bitten, wise as a serpent, generous perhaps, and energetic. But he was cast in the wrong film. He was a sham and the men who laughed with him and cursed at him knew it as well as he did.

Men on the coast of war, watching the tides of ammunition and wounded ebb and flow, are not irreligious. They probably are willing to listen to vital philosophies. But religion must be at least as virile as the lives they lead . . . preached to them by a man who lives that life with them and understands their necessities by comparison with his own. The drool of platitude and the intonation of the mortuary chapel leave them half amused, half angered.

"War ain't no camp meetin'," avers the philosopher across the picket line. "An' the ticket to heaven ain't no Y.M.C.A. letter paper. Me, I ain't goin' to listen to no guy that don't believe his own dope."

What good is a chaplain? There are times when I wish I had a chance to find out.

The Dove and the Sausage

Foret de la Reine, *August 29.*—A taube came up into the sky this morning.

Its coming was heralded by two blasts of a whistle that sent the men to cover, and by the persistent racket of a machine gun that brought them back as close to the road as the sentries would permit.

Up north of us three sausage balloons, riding at anchor marked the edge of the war. Above them circled French planes—their protection against the wily Boche. Below them the anti-aircraft batteries stood constantly prepared for action.

The taube had no business in our sky. By all the rules—by all the preponderance of advertising—we were masters of it. He stood to get his nose burned if he thrust it over our line. But the German pilot apparently had not been informed of this. He came up from the north in one grand leap for altitude and crossed the line in a spray of H.E. shell that should have finished him.

Then without warning he dived into the balloon at his right. Before the protecting planes could turn to engage him he had emptied a clip and the huge sausage was afire. Two figures tumbled out of the basket and presently a pair of great white flowers were floating earthward.

Two allied planes shot down at him. He banked

quickly and escaped the trap, setting the second balloon afire in passing.

Again he shot up . . . the French planes on his tail. One slid about to cut him off from his own lines. Fritz's chances seemed slimmer with every turn of his propeller.

Then with startling lack of judgment he ceased to pay any attention to his pursuers. He dropped like a plumb and turned his machine gun on the third balloon whose attendants were making frantic efforts to haul it down. The big bag crumped in the center and dived leaving a plume of flame and jet smoke across the sky. Two more observers leaped for their lives.

And the enemy plane, carried on by the force of its downward sweep, skimmed beneath the waiting French plane just beyond gun range.

Come, George, let us chalk up a credit for the man in the Taube. . . . A sportsman, my brothers, and withal a sportsman who probably will not live long.

. . . . . .

Noon.—A German plane was brought down to-day. It stood for a moment in the sunlight—a shining cross against a bank of slatey clouds.

A shrapnel-burst low and to the right! A second burst, high and to the left.

Target!

Unidentifialbe bits of wreckage fly upward. The plane upends and heads for a crash.

. . . . . .

Four o'clock.—All day long the road behind us has been under the fire of 210's. The guns must be considerably to our flank because we do not hear the

rumble of the shells—only the bursts—dull sounds like the booming of distant surf.

We have sunk our shelter trenches deeper, preparing for the cannonade which must surely sweep these woods if we remain here many days more.

Several of the men are digging private shelters, grave-like affairs just long enough to hold a man prone.

"These are great stuff," observes Sergt. Ruckel. "If a shell hits they will save a lot of trouble."

"Nothing to do but shovel in the dirt," acquiesced his gunner.

"Shovel in the dirt," scoffed the sergeant. "The shell will attend to that. There won't be anything to do but put up the slab."

"Nothing like preparedness," said the gunner cryptically. And now at least two of the private shelter trenches have slabs already in position at head and foot, gruesome things but useful. All they require is the filling in of the date. . . . Grim humor that may change a bit if Boche shells ever start to hit among these trees.

Gas—Alert!

Foret de la Reine, *August 30.*—There is a tremendous banging on a dishpan. Some one howls "Gas!" Someone blows a whistle.

You know at once that it's merely a drill call—else the man who banged the dishpan would not have lived long enough to blow the whistle.

Leisurely you draw the head-band of your mask over your shaven head. If in the operation you can succeed in dropping your tin hat on your foot you are an adept. One skilled in masking can mash his

big toe as often as he has a big toe left to mash.

The de-hatting and the securing of the mask accomplished, one's first tendency is to exhale, which adds much amusement to the festivities. Immediately the mask inflates, lifting the nose clip a tantalizing distance from the waiting proboscis. Simultaneously the eye-pieces cloud up and the world is in darkness.

Somewhere out in the void—seemingly a hundred miles away—are the mouth-piece and clip. In searching for them a perfect score is obtained only when one jams the mouthpiece into his eye. With practice this can be done ninety-nine times out of a hundred.

Sometimes one succeeds in capturing the mouthpiece and setting his teeth in the rubber bit before he is smothered. He then shoves the clip well up on his nose, enjoys a sensation similar to that which he would have experienced if he had tried to sniff the bait in a steel trap, gasps a few times and settles down to live through an indeterminate period of semi-coma.

Imagine a cold in the head, a dentist's chair in the days of the rubber dam, a gag, an inability to swallow, a nose filled with hot cinders, a hat four sizes too small—all intensified to the *n*th power in the mixing,—and you can realize the wild freedom of the gas mask.

Useful? Ah, yes. During the first six hours of wear it saves the wearer's life. During the next six hours it makes him realize life's futility. A man who had never known the desirability of scientific safety might object to being gassed. Not so the man who knows.

The horses wear gas masks also. . . . Neat little

bundles perched atop the nose and soaked every time the animal takes a drink. A horse without a gas mask can live about five minutes. With a gas mask he can live about five minutes. It takes only about eleven minutes to convince the horse that he ought to wear the gas mask. And there you are.

There are many things one can do while wearing the mask—the principal thing is sleep. The periods of sleep aren't particularly long. The flutter valve has a habit of catching against the trachea tube when one exhales. This can be remedied by sleeping only when inhaling.

Inscriptions on the mask carriers are becoming more numerous every day. Some are embroidered with khaki thread, some just marked with pen or pencil—"I Need Thee Every Hour." "Always in the Way." "People's Gas Light & Coke Co." "Tango Lizard." "Old Man of the Sea." "War Bride." And the last one is probably the most descriptive.

The Front

The Coast of War

Foret de la Reine, *August 31.*—Don Stier and I went up onthe hill south of the woods to-day and got a glimpse of the edge of war.

Vineyards cover the hillsides hereabouts—old men and women have kept them very nearly up to the cultivation of the ante-bellum days. On two sides colorful slopes run out to the horizon. Before us is a flat valley in which forests that appear like green plush alternate with small lakes and plowed fields. Far to the north is a purple cone that we know at once to be Mont Sec.

In the foreground is a farmyard. The buildings are cream colored. They are roofed in red tile and surrounded by tall Lombardy poplars trimmed and trained until they look more like lances of greenish copper than trees.

On the high ground in the zone where the green distance blends to gray, a state road is outlined by its border of elms. From our observation point the elms look like bead-headed pins, laid out mathematically as an ornamental fence for a toy landscape. Rose-colored clouds fly overhead. A beautiful country this. No place for war.

It is hard to imagine that up there just beyond the national highway is the invading army.

One can count the distant villages by the church spires that rise above the wooded hills. There are

five of them—typical peaceful country villages asleep in the sunlight. The high tide of battle does not seem to have touched them.

Then, through the scissors telescope, comes a new scene. The difference between the peace that was and the war that is becomes more apparent. The church in the middle village lacks a spire. As one looks more closely he wonders why the gaping holes in the tile roofs, the gaunt chimneys standing alone, the piled rock and the ruins of walls were not seen more quickly.

There is no sound save the chirping of crickets and the singing of a lark.

There is a puff of black smoke in the wrecked town directly ahead. A civilian might take it for a sign of a starting locomotive. An artilleryman knows it only too well to be H.E.

A chimney has disappeared. One of the red roofs can no longer be seen. Presently a booming—deep in tone but almost unnoticeable in volume—rolls up out of the valley. The work of the 210's is not yet finished. Nor will it be finished until no vestige of stone and mortar is left to mark the spot where the village stood.

In the more immediate foreground a shell explodes like a device in a motion picture: a vast cloud of smoke that swells deliberately, without sound. It is on the road between two of the somnolent towns and seemingly in keeping with the atmosphere of the piece.

But since the dispersing of that fluffy cloud, death is walking along the road. . . . Death waits in the hollows down the slope by the little blue-white pool. . . . Death lingers under the shady branches of the elms in the green wood. The breath of de-

struction—phosgene or yellow-cross—in the summery air.

Down the road immediately below us walks little Yvonne, daughter of the farmer who lives in the house under the Lombardy poplars. Yvonne in her pigtails, her gown of American calico, her home knit stockings and her wooden-soled shoes is somehow out of the picture. A school book is under her arm. A school book! Lord help us! Can such things be? Somewhere in the world teachers are ringing bells in the doorways of little red schoolhouses (or whatever color the little red schoolhouse of this neighborhood happens to be). Rationality clings to its own even here on the fringe of chaos.

An ammunition truck stops. A driver leans over and speaks to Yvonne. He stretches a great paw down to her. He raises her up to the seat beside him and Yvonne rides to school as a great lady in a limousine might ride to the opera.

The blue gray boxes in the truck:

> "9 cartouches—75 mm. *obus explosif*, normal xxx, TBM 22 142"

mean nothing to Yvonne. She is only six years old. She cannot remember the time when blue gray boxes marked with such cabalistic signs did not constitute the greater portion of the cargoes hauled past her father's gate.

A taube darts into view for a moment from behind a cloud and a cluster of puff balls bursts out in the air beneath him.

He is gone in a moment, but all along the line the sausages start for the ground and from behind us comes the hum of a winged squadron flying north to battle.

To our flank the heavy shells continue to fall on

the crossroads. Our wagons are coming in over a new route, but the Boche gives us no credit for intelligence. Like the wise men of Gotham who set about catching a sparrow, he is building a wall about two sides of us.

Yesterday Fritz sent over a number of small balloons laden with sundry fiction concerning the start of the war.

If he knew how valuable his works have become on this side of the line he would sell them to us instead of spending good marks to distribute them gratis.

There are two classes of romance now in the course of dissemination. One reads "Americans! Why are you fighting England's battles? Why are we forced needlessly to slaughter your men on all fronts?" A fair question. Why indeed? But it seems rather pointless that Gerry should be cross-examining us—us who are not fighting England's battles or anybody else's but merely aching for a crack at him.

This questionnaire, while short, is very popular. Copies somewhat soiled are selling for ten francs cash.

The second is more beautiful. It is illustrated in the barroom mural style. An American soldier is represented seated in an armchair, a buxom fraulein on each knee, a stein of beer poised overhead.

Beneath this engraving is the inevitable catch:

"Americans, why do you treat your prisoners so badly when we treat you like this?"

Propaganda of this edition, damaged or undamaged, closed last night at "Twenty francs bid—none offered."

German messages have become our most popular form of literature. If Boche planes bearing a cargo

of such material could be marked with a distinguishing label, a safe conduct could be arranged for them to any part of the American lines. Americans are literally starving for information as to who started the war and if so why.

Boucq which was merely a dunghill village when we first saw it, has become a metropolis. The First Division infantry is camped in the town and on the hills behind it. Every little tree clump is full of *soldats*. Every barn has been taken over by a kitchen.

Don and I ran into this discovery on our way back to camp. Both of us realized at once that portentous happenings were on the way.

"First Division," observed Don. "The place is lousy with 'em. Maybe this big attack wasn't so much of a stall as we thought."

I admitted the logic of his guess. The A.E.F. is not what you might call long on shock troops. Hence where there's trouble you'll generally find the First Division.

The Sixteenth Infantry was in the town. Not the same Sixteenth that swelled the graveyards over west but a reincarnation of it pieced out with replacements. And it was an odd outfit.

For the most part the doughboys with whom we came in contact in a walk of a kilometer or so are merely kids who don't look to be a day over sixteen. Probably the average actual age is a year or two higher than the average apparent age—but not much if any more than a year. They are clean looking kids—might be the pick of the Freshman class of any big American university—lean, straight, well set-up even in army issue uniforms.

But there's something depressing about them—probably the psychic message that they themselves are depressed. If there's any joke about this war they seem to have missed it. They don't sit around as our men do, cracking jokes and thinking up bright remarks to embroider on gas masks. These lads have the serious faces of old and disillusioned men. The quiet into which they have drawn themselves is a more terrible sight if one stops to analyze it than the Red Cross trains that slide by in the dawn.

They do not need to be told why they are here. To-morrow—perhaps to-night—they will be marched fifteen or twenty miles to another line of trenches where they will go over the top almost immediately at zero hour of another gray morning.

A corporal was talking to an artilleryman as Don and I came by. He did not see us and he continued to talk in a hollow, listless voice long after we were within earshot.

"They can't kid me. I know this sector. This road runs up to Raulecourt and then over the fields to Mont Sec. That's where we're going . . . Mont Sec. And I'm tellin' you somethin', Buddy, if they try to send us up that hill I'll tell my squad to turn around and get the hell out of there. I've been on that hill before. . . . "

Don and I went on without taking notice of this bit of treason. It was, of course, merely the old latrine rumor in another and more virulent form. If the Sixteenth Infantry got orders to go up the hill it would go up the hill. In motion a soldier always finds it easier to do what he's told than to try to figure out how to do something else. But for all that the corporal's hopeless protest had a tremendous significance as an outward sign of a psychological state.

If veterans like these feel so deeply on the subject of war it must be something quite different from the article described in the literature now circulating in the United States.

Bombardment

Foret de la Reine, *September 1.*—A 210 lit in the field behind us and to the right and set the hills to echoing. A moment's pause and then came a second explosion followed by a series of earthquakes.

The Boche had found the range of an ammunition dump.

There is one advantage in being executive officer of a battery lying in echelon. One is foot-loose and fancy-free and may make little journeys away from one's billet to observation points nearer the scenes of action.

I picked up the scissors telescope and started for the hill to the south of the woods. On the way across the road I ran into Major Beckett of the medical corps also intent on learning what all the shooting was about. Together we made our way up the slope.

The Boche heavies were taking their time about the job they had to do. Only one gun seemed to be working and that one fired at the rate of about six shots an hour.

From the hill the bombardment presented a weirdly beautiful sight . . . "a column of smoke by day, a pillar of fire by night."

Somewhere overhead was an aëroplane. It could not be seen behind the clouds but the murmur of its motors was easily distinguishable and occasionally it turned loose a machine gun in the slow stutter of a code message.

It was twilight when the eleventh shot struck a small pile of melanite shells on the edge of the dump. The small pile detonated a larger one near it and from that the destruction leaped to the boxed shells and fuses of the main abri. The boxes were presently supplying fuel to a column of fire that rose fifty or sixty feet in the air.

Depending on the character of the explosive reached by the blaze the cloud that rose upward from the edge of the woods was now a brilliant green, now yellow, now red. Sometimes several big projectiles detonated at once. Then a smoke ring, two or three hundred yards in diameter and almost a perfect circle in shape and black as a funeral wreath, sailed lazily upward, turning to gold as it rose high enough to meet the rays of the setting sun.

With the settling of the dark the sky above the woods became livid and streaked with crimson. A tinted church steeple unseen by day was now plainly visible. The red roofs of a village perhaps a mile from the fire loomed up strangely in the varicolored lights.

The bursts followed one another with the irregular insistence of a poorly timed barrage, sometimes hurling a volcano of sparks over the woods, sometimes shooting new bands of fire at weird angles out across the blackness. Until midnight the cannonade continued. Then a German barrage added to the din. When it ceased the smoldering woods were quiet.

Rockets and flares mark the Boche positions on the high ground. Beyond that line, safe in some little French village that hates the sight of him the aviator who made the adjustment is sitting down to his

beer and sausage. Not far from him a gratified artillery captain is leering at the red sky to the south well satisfied with the destruction he has wrought.

The Major and I went down the hill to the Boucq road to find ourselves in an unexpected jam. The highway was seething with northward bound artillery—battery on battery moving in silence through the night—seventy-fives, 155 howitzers, eight-inch mortars—guns without end. The clans are gathering.

There is a brickyard south of the woods where an enterprising artisan no longer interested in the manufacture of tile has turned his house into a café. There one may buy passable champagne for *dix francs* the liter and the place is well patronized.

Last night while the guns were passing Phil Newman and Ridgely Hudson came home from this beautiful retreat. Hudson, who had been repeating that it was *a bra bricht moonlicht nicht tonicht*, narrowly escaped being knocked down by a major's horse. He swore in a voice that probably startled the sleepers in the dugouts on Mont Sec.

"Where the hell are you going?" he demanded truculently. And before an answer could be given he warmed to his subject. "What regiment is this?"

"Seventh Field Artillery—First Division," replied a sergeant.

"Then what the hell are you doing sprawled all over the road? Think you're in England? Get over there where you belong. . . ." Obediently the battery moved over en masse to the right.

"Who the hell are you?" inquired the startled major.

"Don't you recognize a general officer when you see one?" rasped Second Lieut. Hudson. "I've

a good notion to court-martial every officer in this column."

The Major seemed glad enough to let it go at that. The line of guns moved on.

"For the love of Mike, Hudson," breathed Newman, "haven't you got any sense? Where do you think you'd be now if that major had dismounted?"

Hudson laughed condescendingly.

"Hell, Newman," he said, "on a night as dark as this even you could be a general officer."

As Beckett and I reached camp Lieut. Hobey Lawton was just sliding off his horse at F battery's picket line.

"I was just up visiting my old friends in the 102nd F.A.," he said. "Maybe this sector will amount to something some day but just now it's a washout. All you need to run a battery up there is a swab and plenty of grease. They haven't fired a barrage in two weeks.

"I spent the afternoon in their dugout and stopped three fights. Their razor blades are all dull and that makes for a hell of a life.

"I asked the executive officer where his battery position was on the map and he pointed to a hole about an inch in diameter. 'We're in that hole somewhere,' he says. 'I used to know just exactly because there was a fly speck there. But its all worn off. I dread getting a new map because if we had one we'd have to go out and relocate the battery.'"

Hobey rustled some coffee at the kitchen and we sat up until long after midnight helping him drink it. He was pleasant company—what with his news of entrenched batteries that fire only on Christmas

and New Year's. We went to bed with our faith in war somewhat restored.

Guns

Foret de la Reine, *September 2.*—There has been some shelling to-day. Heinie is doing it all, as has been the case for the past week. He woke us up at reveille this morning with a couple of 210's dumped into an open field across the road. If any of our guns are emplaced and ready to fire they are keeping mighty quiet about it.

Heinie doesn't seem to be able to understand the silence. Probably that's the reason he continues to shoot the heavy stuff into open spaces that aren't doing him any harm.

In the meantime the preparations for his finish go on unceasingly. Guns—all weights, all sizes, all lengths, all models and ages—pass on toward the quiet rim of the hills that gossip has identified as the Front. No one talks of it much any more save to mention at mess that "the Umpteenth Field Artillery went up last night."

"So," observed Captain Netcott, helping himself to the jam, "I know a couple of looies in that outfit. Wasn't Lieut. Soandso at Fort Sill when we were there?"

"Oui," grunts Lieut. Peters without stopping to think. Everybody was at Fort Sill—that is everybody in artillery—so the answer is safe enough.

"We'll have to go up and visit them."

"Yeah," acquiesces Peters, his mind on a Salvation Army hut where, it is said, candy may be purchased for a price. Candy is after all much more important

than long lost friends in the Umpteenth Field Artillery.

And so the matter rests.

The Umpteenth Field Artillery has passed up and is forgotten as other regiments clank along over the same trail.

But whatever is in the wind—and nobody seems to know just what it is—this much is certain: the greater portion of the fireworks will be H.E. shell. The dumps back of Boucq are full of it.

"Some artillery action took place in the —— sector.

We see that in the reports every time a newspaper strays into camp.

"Some artillery action. . . ."

Will they be saying that of us to-morrow or next week? We haven't information enough to discuss the situation save in its broadest aspects. But we think a great deal. We cannot stand by the side of the road night after night as the unseen guns clatter by in the dark and not feel the foreboding of the coming storm.

Is this to be another Verdun with guns laid hub to hub across the sector? Is this to be another Château-Thierry with 75s raking the hills in lieu of musketry fire? Is this to be a new scheme of attack, a new apportionment of steel against men?

Quién sabe?

We only know that the guns go up, that the fire bringers are massing against the Boche as they have never been massed before.

It is a magnificent if terrible spectacle that arises in one's mind at the prospect of the grand attack—a tremendous phalanx of cannon, blasting a path down a valley of strongholds, leveling the hills, filling the valleys with havoc.

The plan? We know nothing of it. The infantry? We have not seen it. Are we to be part of a great offensive or part of a tremendous feint? We cannot guess.

But we do know this: Attack or feint, drive or stand, when zero hour comes there will be a typhoon of old iron such as this part of France has never witnessed (even when 40,000 men died in 48 minutes up there at the end of the white road). Guns firing from every ruin, every grove, every depression will contribute their allotment of G.I. cans and horse-weights to the unsuspecting Allemands.

The guns go up unceasingly; and Heinie, unmindful of the hard luck that hangs over him, wastes shells in open fields and blows up cottages in villages long since deserted.

The Trenches

Bouçonville, *September 3.*—The way "up front" led through a forest. It was mostly a white road, wet with cement, cluttered with American steam rollers, dump carts and scarifiers until it looked like an illustration out of the eternal ad of the "Annual Good Roads Edition" "Cementola Makes This Road Ride-Able." A sign met one's eye at the first turn where the narrow gauge snaked across it in a dive from one grove to another: "Attention Au Train," with a translation beneath: "Look Out for the Cars." It was hard to imagine that at the upper end of so prosaic a boulevard the Boche lay entrenched in strongholds four years in the building.

Don Stier and I got permission to travel forward only after an animated wrangle with Capt. Wheeler and the higher officers of the echelon.

"You'll see action soon enough," they argued.

"We'll see action too soon if we don't know what we're getting into," I said. And Don, as battery reconnaissance officer, added his bit:

"The position has to be located. We can lay it out better now than later when the guns are on the road."

And after many repetitions of this theme a pair of lone explorers started for No Man's Land.

Equipment consisted of map cases, field glasses, pistols, ammunition, gas masks, tin hats, ponchos, plane table, goniometer, chain, alidade and other things listed in "Cook's Tour of the Artillery Positions" or "Baedecker's Gunner's Guide."

The first intimation that the white highway might be leading toward dangerous ends came with a large white placard affixed to a tree: "Balloon Road—No Overhead Wires" (meaning that this road was to be kept unobstructed so that the trucks might haul the observation sausages forward). Soon afterwards came two more portentous cautions: "Lights Out!" "Gas Alert."

Then the road swung abruptly to the left out of the woods and assumed all the appearance of a street carnival. Festoons of weathered camouflage were strung in arches overhead. Walls of reeds and trellises of plaited branches rose at the sides. It was a sad looking armor through which the noonday sun struck with dizzy uncertainty. One really missed the ballyhoo of fakirs selling peanuts and similar indigestibles and the call of the side show ticket sellers. The picture was incomplete without them.

But here was a tunnel of defilade. Under these strips of tattered burlap the tides of battle might ebb and flow secure from prying eyes on Mont Sec.

In place of the carnival crew an occasional sentry contributed to the festivities by asking personal questions and waving an inpersonal bayonet.

"You'll have to ride fifty meters apart on this road," he cautioned us. "It's hot—what I mean."

So we obeyed the injunction and for two kilometers we clattered on behind the reed fence with all the sensations of impending execution. Artillery snipers were up there on Mont Sec. We could just barely see the silhouette of the hill through the arbor—green-brown now, instead of blue as it had appeared from the Foret de la Reine. On the crest would be lads with scissors instruments yearning for a sight of us and our valuable horses. Thin shrubbery seemed to be scant protection against a possible harassing fire on the road. The thrill of personal risk was on us for the first time since we rode out of Valdahon.

At Raulecourt, squarely under the swaggering mountain, we dismounted and tied up our horses. It seems to be against the rules for officers to go clattering about the open countryside in daylight and under the eyes of the Boche. He might not waste a shell on a brace of lieutenants . . . but horses are something else again.

Raulecourt was—and is—almost intact. As compared with other towns on the front it is in a remarkable state of preservation. One or two civilian families remain in it—securely buttressed in stone barns by the wreckage of their neighbors' homes, protected against gas by concrete chambers with blanketed doors—handiwork of the American Engineers. The street seems almost populous for only about two thirds of the buildings have been destroyed.

A sentry seized out horses and deposited them in escrow in a ruin near the end of the camouflaged

road. He gave us no receipt and we were forced to take his word that they would be there when we got back.

The thrill of the march forward afoot was lessened somewhat when we had to shoulder our equipment. Plane tables were not designed for convenient transport. But there seemed to be no cure for it.

Many details required our attention. We had to halt at a corner labeled "Forty-second and Broadway" to get the countersign. Forty-second and Broadway was a crossing marked by four ruins. In the least dilapidated of the ruins dwelt the town major. His office was somewhere corresponding to Times Square. Amid the wreckage of the Knickerbocker Hotel a French cook was compounding savory delights in a field kitchen that was ancient when the Big Berthas began to level Liege. The American Red Cross outpost was housed in a battered barn across the street. The fourth corner looked no worse than the rest but must have been a ruin indeed. Not even a tired doughboy claimed that pile of rock for his own.

Raulecourt, after the fashion of villages in the sector, has its tottering church. Here as usual was the Boche center of impact. The zones of destruction spread outward with the spire as the center. But this, one must admit, was less a display of impiety than it sounds. Most of the shooting hereabout has been done by map, and on artillery maps the dot which indicates a town is always the precise location of the church steeple.

The tower clock had stopped at half past six—a shell had gone through one face of it. . . .

Despite the password an obdurate sentry refused

us right of way across the rising ground in the direction of Mont Sec.

"You'll have to go around by way of Broussey," he declared, "or else wait till dark."

In vain we argued. We had too much equipment, too little time, we had hardly enough energy, we had no inclination. But that didn't bother the sentry.

We gathered up our numerous lares and penates and followed the long road around to the northwest. A gun boomed as we left Raulecourt. We stood for a moment, amateurs that we were, waiting for the whining of a shell—which of course never came. As artillerymen we should have known that the shell coming toward you usually arrives before the report of the gun that sends it. All that you hear when it is leaping to meet you is the shriek of its passage through the air, and rumor has it that when Austrian 88s are shooting, you don't hear even that.

There was no second shot but we traveled forward with all the tingling sensations born of battle.

The interminable white road wound five or six kilometers between shady elms to Broussey—a village of gaping walls, roofless houses, silence. Some French soldiers were dining under the trees on a simple meal of brown bread and *vin rouge*. A line of rusted barbed wire cut across the landscape to the right marking what we learned afterwards were the third line positions.

We were at the Front—a Front where French *poilus* loitered over a mid-afternoon meal, where birds sang overhead and old women washed clothes in a roadside orchard.

The way from here led to the right, past the

customary abandoned church on to the side of a little hill.

An aëroplane came singing out of the north and in accordance with instructions, we stopped short. As yet we have had no experience with shell fire but we have seen bombers at work and we have a wholesome respect for the destruction that may come out of the air. The nationality of the avion was indeterminate until the report of H.E. thundered over our heads and a black cloud unfolded itself in the wake of the plane. We have learned that Boche anti-aircraft guns shoot time fuse shell which bursts as a black smudge. Our batteries favor shrapnel which makes white puff balls.

We watched the shooting for a while. There is always a lingering idea back in the mind of every soldier who watches the work of an A.A. gun that some day the shells will come close enough to the target to make the fight interesting.

Our supreme moment, however, arrived five minutes later as we came in sight of the rock heaps that were once Bouçonville. There came a sound like the screech of an airbrake and automatically we flopped flat in the muddy road. There is infinite comfort in a long mud puddle when a shell is coming from thence to hither. Instinct told us that danger was near. Instinct told us what to do about it.

The shell hit in the road, ricocheted and dropped in the field beyond—a dud.

We waited a moment, then warily and muddily arose, gathered our scattered paraphernalia and trudged on. Inasmuch as the shell had cleared us by a safe margin, we were sorry that it had failed to explode. A close shave from a dud is nothing to write home about.

Mont Sec loomed up north of us—an inland Gibraltar, forbidding, ominous. The lines of barbed wire and the protrusion of the concrete observatory were plainly visible from the road, but no sign of life on the hill itself nor in the little white village half way down the slope to the right of it betrayed the presence of the invader.

Forty thousand men died there. Forty thousand lives were the price paid for a victory that lasted one hour. Then the Boche cleared the slope with artillery from the ridges beyond.

Shells were falling in a village to the east. The echoes came back dully, long after the tiny puffs of smoke proclaimed their arrival.

"Rambucourt," said Don looking at his map. "Part of our brigade is in there."

A big shell, probably a 150, threw up a shower of dirt south of the town.

"Doesn't seem to be an adjustment," he commented. "They certainly must be able to see that they aren't hitting anything in the village."

. . . Our battery position was one of the sort that would have been selected under ordinary circumstances only as a pretty spot for a suicide.

Item—It straddles a crossroads—one platoon to the east, one to the west of the Raulecourt-Bouçonville lane.

Item—It is close to a bridge which already bears marks of excellent registration.

Item—Two guns are assigned to an old French position with shell holes fore and aft.

Item—Our P.C. and ammunition dumps must be located in an orchard probably plotted on German maps for four years back.

Item—The bridge crosses a creek—now dry—

that stretches over toward Broussey—a geographical mark on anybody's map and one platoon will be on the creek bank. A blind man ought to be able to get the range of it.

A lovely place this—a lovely prospect. Over the quaking bridge between two wrecked buildings of Bouçonville the shell-shocked road turns north and staggers east and west again through what seems once to have been a town. A Y.M.C.A. station flings its flag to the breeze from a turn in the street. Across the way a dressing station claims the only two-story building left intact in the village. Every cellar is a dugout. Every shaking wall, every rickety roof has been impressed as shelter by artillery, infantry, signal corps details of a dozen regiments.

A tentative location for our working party was selected about a block up the street from the hospital. It gave promise of security as one stepped across the threshold. A heavily vaulted ceiling, blackened by the smoke of generations of family cooking, indicated that the place once had served as a kitchen. A stone fireplace covered one side of the room. The entrance to a wine cellar now used as a bomb-proof was the most important feature of the opposite wall. It was hard to imagine that busy Bertha might have crumbled most of the house that once surrounded this room.

But it does not do to underrate Bertha. We passed on through the kitchen and arrived at the billet proper—a great barn-like chamber, a muddy floor, broken walls, a large leaky tile roof with patches of sky visible between the rafters; a chaos of packs, rifles, provisions, hand grenades, clothing. . . . The broad out of doors had its points of superiority.

Out battery position was overrun with weeds, which was fortunate, and with doughboys, which was not fortunate.

If there is one thing your artilleryman has been taught to fear more than another it is the deadly aëroplane photograph. You may tie burlap on your wheels and pad your horses' hoofs and haul your guns into position at midnight in the dark o' the moon. But the photographs will get you if you don't watch out. You may keep your men hidden, work only at night, and put your guns into position only just before zero hour and then get hit by a shell before Number One pulls the lanyard. That's the aërial photo for you. It divines your innermost thoughts, discloses to the enemy your morale, age, weight, and attitude toward the income tax. In brief it is considerable of a nuisance.

To the casual observer the aërial photo is an unintelligible jumble of spots and lines. As a means of information it looks to be just a little less useful than a map. But here enters one of those peculiar professions born of the war. The little man whose job it is to study these pictures sees many things besides the thumbprints of the signal corps attaché who developed them.

Four dots evenly spaced mark the location of a battery. One dot—one gun. That's a simple one. If the dots are round and white with a black center, the battery is anti-aircraft. (The A.A. guns have a 360 degree field of fire and consequently a circular trail hole.) A fine white line is phone wire. A fine white line within a black line is a phone trench. A convergence of phone lines marks a headquarters. And so it goes. . . .

It has been said by the irreverent that a fly hap-

pened to alight one day on a drying photograph and that for weeks afterward one battery did nothing but bombard a place in an open field corresponding to the fly's resting place. Even the scientific ones slip up occasionally.

One fights the aërial photo with fish net and green burlap. The nets are made so large that four of them raised on poles and wire will cover a battery position. The burlap is woven through the meshes of the screen just thickly enough to cast an amorphous shadow. From close at hand it looks like scant protection. At near ranges it affords no more concealment than a picket fence. But it has one outstanding virtue. It works.

From the heights at which an aëroplane must maneuver the net blends with the ground. Its semi-transparency breaks up the form of objects beneath and the photo fails to catch the square edges and straight lines that betray emplacements.

Paths, however, refuse to stay put. Men walk out from under the nets and trample down weeds that stood straight yesterday. They cut the corners of existing trails and so change the appearance of things on the photo map.

Which, little by little brings us back to the original theme. . . . Our position was given concealment by weeds and was being given the unmistakable signs of active occupation by our uninvited doughboy guests. The weeds, if preserved in their pristine unloveliness, would impart to the place an abandoned look calculated to deceive the Boche. The doughboys, with no such affliction as aëroplane photographs to disturb their frolicsome minds had marched over the weeds until the place looked as if it might have been occupied by a circus.

We paid scant attention to that phase of our misfortune. It is difficult to imagine a man with the hives getting "het up" about a mosquito bite. We ordered the infantrymen off our premises, put up a wire fence and a few "Verboten" signs and proceeded to locate ourselves.

The church spire at Rambucourt wouldn't stand still. We shot it three times trying to tie down the corners of an Italian resection, but unlike well behaved steeples in the States it seemed to be tangoing all over the lot. No two of the three shots produced anything like the same result. It appeared first on one side of the alidade and then on the other with maddening disregard for the coventions.

We never did get the matter of the Rambucourt steeple straightened out. We sighted three other steeples and checked on a fourth. They were all stationary and in their proper places, but when we prepared to check once more on Rambucourt a 210 smashed into it with a violence that shook the earth under our feet. As we looked our steeple leaned over and clattered down in smoke and dust.

The shelling of the town had been going on in a lackadaisical fashion all afternoon. After the hit on the steeple the pace quickened. Don stopped his work on map and plane table and both of us turned our attention to the town through our binoculars. The shells were drifting south again, dropping at a rate of about one every three minutes apparently in a field.

"I don't make it out," said Don, which may have referred to the seeming purposelessness of the fire or the strange behavior of the church's steeple. An aëroplane was moving overhead every now and then

sending dots and dashes with a machine gun. Obviously Heinie was up to some sort of adjustment. But from where we sat he didn't seem to be getting anywhere.

We located a point on the map corresponding to the higher ground back of the reserve trenches and with that as a reference point located the position to be occupied by the first piece by traverse and chain. Chaining was difficult because a movement of ten or twenty feet always brought one into the trenches with little inconveniences in the shape of barbed wire and shell holes. Fortunately, however, we had the whole trench system to ourselves. It was apparent that these earthworks had not been occupied for many a moon.

At this point, so we learned from the map, No Man's Land is almost a mile wide. It probably is like other points in the Toul sector where both sides were glad enough to draw back to the edges of the marshy ground in the plain and leave a broad open space for prowling.

It was nearly five o'clock when we had finished our work and plotted the layout of the guns. Two pairs of breeches had been sacrificed and we were cut up a bit with barbed wire. But it had been a day of fair accomplishment, and Fritz hadn't taken a shot at us. Except for the rumble of bursting shell over Rambucourt way we might have been working in Lincoln Park.

By the time the chaining was finished, things had begun to liven up with our neighbors. We stood for a while on the knoll behind our little orchard looking across the wire-strewn fields at the target practice, half hoping that the adjustment was going wild, but knowing all the time that the plotting of overs and

shorts had finished and that the real performance was presently to begin. And, in accordance with all the rules of the game, it did begin.

An incendiary shell broke like a captive rocket, disclosing momentarily the pitiful fraud of a camouflage net that to us had seemed like shrubbery. The tufts of raffia as seen through the binoculars stood out like polka dots on the wire against the flare. Then the entire net took fire.

Immediately the shells began to fall eight a minute on the helpless battery that the trellis had covered. It was a terrible sight to us whose entire experience with shells had hitherto been on the sending side.

Men whom we knew were being wiped out by that fire. We did not speak of it but each knew what the other was thinking. We were picturing ourselves in the same situation—fixed targets for the painstaking Boche—unable to move—or to return a shot.

It was perhaps an hour before the climax came—a tremendous blast, a sudden flare, a steady glow. An ammunition dump had been hit.

The German bombardment subsided into a silence that was nerve racking. An aëroplane almost out of sight overhead fired a few machine gun tattoos and slid into the gathering blue of the north.

There was no denying Heinie's assurance and efficiency. One could easily hate him for it. He had not fired a single superfluous shot.

We picked up our instruments and started across the hill toward camp.

Three Thousand Rounds

Bouçonville and Foret de la Reine, *September 4.*—On the range at Camp Logan shrapnel used to

come three in a box—each round neatly put up in a tin wrapper. By signing waivers in triplicate and assuming responsibility for each shell one might get four caisson loads—424 rounds. Having gone through all that preliminary bookkeeping for the benefit of an auditor in the ordnance department, and checked and rechecked the issue with the regimental supply officer, one felt at liberty to haul the precious stuff to the firing point and shoot it under the personal supervision of seventeen observers. Each observer was empowered to make his own notation of the expenditure of "shrapnel, common, rounds one" every time No. 1 pushed the firing handle. There were among others the range officer, the assistant range officer and recorder, the battery commander and two recorders, three telephone operators with one recorder apiece, the safety officer, the ammunition sergeant, the regimental instructor, all the officers of the regiment, and a whole lot of visiting officers, each with pad and pencil, sensing shots and thereby certifying that a perfectly good or perfectly poor round of ammunition had been properly disbursed. The obsequies of "shrapnel, common, rounds one" were thorough, elaborate and impressive. . . .

. . . . . .

Our little reconnaissance party, hungry and tired, reached the battery camp just at dusk.

There was a rumbling over in the northwest, intensifying the quiet of the dark about Mont Sec. In a week the Foret de la Reine had become our home, a place of relaxation and security. We had come into it in the dark of the moon in fear and trembling, expectant of massacre, and now we rode

back to it like tired business men alighting in the peaceful suburbs after a day at the office. Back in the north the four-star rockets of the Boche tumbled across a black void. . . . What of it?

"Beans for supper," recalled the epicurean reconnaissance officer.

"Beans, Willy, Slum, Java," augmented the more imaginative executive. "I can think of a larger menu. I'm hungrier."

And then came disaster. Four fourgons turned out of the woods. At the head of the procession rode the top sergeant with a message for the executive officer, to wit:

"You will return with working party to battery positions at Bouçonville and make preparations to recieve two thousand rounds of ammunition—H.E. normal—which must be under cover before daylight. God help you and may you have a pleasant evening. Captain Wheeler."

And so the E.O. turned his weary horse toward the front again. A mist was settling down and the air was colder. There were no prospects for a supper in Bouçonville.

It was impossible to make decent preparation for the reception of two thousand rounds of ammunition at the battery positions. The timbering of the ancient dumps had long since rotted away.

To cut niches along the road without showing signs of new work was out of the question. There remained no chance for shelter save in the little orchard and two old covered pits. The men lay down on damp duckboards in the old third line trench out of the glare of occasional star shells and awaited the arrival of the truck trains.

They did not need to be cautioned to keep quiet. The trenches, sloppy and cold and fringed with wire seemed like elongated graves as one stumbled through them in the fog. They were quite like their pictures and the battery detail, unaware of the layout of this amazing front, could not but feel that Heinie's listening posts were just across the parapets.

The first of the ammunition, it was reported, was due at 9 o'clock. Therefore it was expected about midnight. Ammunition trains have an independent spirit unique among military institutions.

The men found a little dugout half filled with hand grenades and a can of gasoline. It would hold only one man at a time so they lined up at the entryway to take turn about on its occupancy as a smoking room. Smoking in the open air was of course strictly forbidden, for the eyes on Mont Sec would be peering through the dark all night long. The decorum of the brave *soldats* with respect to perils made in Germany was all that any martinet could demand. Hand grenades and gasoline were something else again.

At one o'clock came fourteen truck loads of ammunition, sixteen boxes to the truck, nine shells to the box, fifteen pounds of weight to the shell. Excellent prospects for an interesting and useful morning.

Trouble started when the trucks found out that they couldn't pull up the gentle slope of our little muddy byroad. They dropped their tail gates on the Broussey-Bouçonville highway a couple of hundred yards from the orchard. And with such an excellent start the ill luck continued until daylight.

The pits which should have held a thousand rounds would accommodate only five hundred. The part of the orchard nearest the road was thin and gave no protection from frontal or overhead obser-

vation. The part best suited to the concealment of piled boxes suddenly revealed itself as a trap cross woven with barbed wire. Without so much as a wheelbarrow to aid the transport the men had to carry something over ten tons of high explosive up the road and through the underbrush.

Yet little by little the chaotic pile of boxes along the highway dwindled. A parquet flooring of blue cases spread itself across the orchard. Tiers of boxes were laid about the old shelters where they would add no new outlines to aërial photos. At three o'clock the road was clear. Weeds, branches and artificial camouflage were thrown across the piles and the men raised their heads for a breathing spell. There remained only a walk of a couple of miles across the hill to Raulecourt, then a ride home to bed. . . .

The first sergeant was calling to the detail to fall in along the Raulecourt lane when there arose a dull but insistent murmur over in the direction of Broussey. The executive who had just finished checking off the last of the delivery turned about to confront another ammunition train which had come to a full stop at the crossroads.

Grouped about the trucks were a lieutenant in charge of the train, a regimental munitions officer, two or three unidentified officers, some sergeants, corporals and privates.

"Here's a thousand rounds of H.E.," said the lieutenant of the trains. "Where do you want it?"

"I don't," disagreed the executive officer, "Give your old iron to somebody else. We've got our share."

"Can't turn the trucks around here," replied the trains man. "You gotta take 'em."

The executive, with memories of the careful methods with which the great American republic issued its ammunition, stood on his rights.

"You can't get me to sign for another damned round," he declared. "I was ordered to receive two thousand rounds. I've received two thousand. I haven't men enough to stow away any more before daylight."

"Sign, hell," returned Mr. Trains affably, "Bill, how many rounds did you check this battery for?"

"Dunno," said a voice in the night. "My pencil got busted an' I quit checkin'."

"Mark him two thousand and we'll dump this here," was the astonishing answer. "Why should we haggle about a thousand shells?"

Shades of the shrapnel that came in the tin case! Could this be possible.

The executive officer blinked in amazement. Before he could recover the full use of his faculties the artillery munitions officer joined the colloquy.

"You'll have to take it, Bob," he ruled. "We can't get it across the bridge to any other battery and we can't take it back."

And that was that.

The truck crews already had dropped their tail gates and were shunting the boxes into the ditch by the roadside. It seemed that all the shells in France were being spread out here where no one wanted them nor knew what to do with them. The executive accepted the inevitable in silence. The old order certainly was changing. He was the possessor of some $30,000 worth of ammunition—more than an entire brigade would have been allowed in a year according to the ante-war schedule—and not a round of it was charged to him.

Stowage of shells had now become not so much a matter of weight versus brawn as a race with daylight. At four o'clock it would be misty twlight. At 4:30 it would be clear enough for an aëroplane to make an observation flight. At 5 it would be day.

The cannoneers, already so tired that they could hardly lift the boxes from the trucks turned to their new task with little enthusiasm.

The executive looked at his watch and the work ahead simultaneously.

"Haul it into the weeds and throw a net over it," he ordered. "There's nothing else to be done."

Which shows how quickly one may receive an education in the art of modern war.

The diary of Sergt. Ruckel has this to say of the rest of the night:

"Well, we got the stuff off the road. Looks like hell. One green square in a brown field. If the Huns don't shell it they're blind. . . .

"Back to Raulecourt over the hill via eight miles of trenches and twenty miles of barbed wire.

"Stopped for hot chocolate at the Red Cross dump in Raulecourt. Kinda took the curse off the rest of the evening. Place was milling with doughboys going up and doughboys coming down—telephone men—and what not. Plenty of chocolate. This isn't such a bad war after all. Maybe the Heinies won't find our ammunition dump."

The working party reached camp in time for breakfast and turned in for sleep. But it was nearly an hour before the Executive Officer closed his eyes. He was thinking of the shrapnel that used to come in the tin case.

Gas

Foret de la Reine, *September 4.*—In the depths of this Arcady the echelon lay in peaceful slumber. Nature's own camouflage net was overhead. The bombardment of Rambucourt was a dim echo. Six kilometers away was war. But here was peace.

That was an hour ago.

Now the camp is a seething confusion. Pistols, Klaxons, wash-pan drums, shouts, shrieks, prayers, groans, curses contribute to the din. "Gas!" "Gas!" "Gas!"

Now and then from the mélange of sound comes a coherent cry:

"Where the hell's my mask?"

"I can't find my gas mask—lemme take yours"—this latter a crazed, anguished shriek. Then the smothered reply: "Go to hell."

Little Tommy Murphy, dazed and half asleep, crawls out of his pup tent and looks around. Suddenly realizing the import of the racket he dives back in again.

Blankets, clothes, general equipment come flying out in rapid-fire disorder, accompanied by shrieks which grow steadily in volume.

"I can't find it! I'm gassed. I'm dying."

The pup tent is suddenly uprooted and kites upward into a tree.

"It's gone! I'm gassed! I'm gassed!"

A member of the masked rabble stops his rush through the woods long enough to point out to Johnny the missing mask. It has been under his knees since his search began.

Johnny claps it to his face, sticks his nose into the clip and faints. He has had too much for one night's entertainment.

Private Steele, on his way back from the engineers' dump with a bucket of water, comes tearing into camp holding his nose and breathing through his mouth. He is still carrying his bucket.

One man near the gas Non-Com.'s tent gets his mask adjusted and sits down. The first thing that meets his touch is a piece of broken trachea tube. And he joins the senseless rush through the jungle.

His agonized wail echoes after him:

"It's broken . . . The tube's off . . . Get me a new one . . . Quick! For God's sake."

It was a false alarm. There was no gas. The only casualties are barked shins and bruised heads. The men are coming sheepishly back to their wrecked shelter tents. But the alarm has had its wholesome effect. The gas mask has ceased to be just an incubus. It has assumed a personal relationship.

Subject: Hoss Thief

Foret de la Reine, *September 5.*—It happened in this wise:

The sentries at Raulecourt were obdurate—a habit with sentries—and a party of officers had to proceed "up front" on foot: Capt. Wheeler, Capt. Gould, Lieut. Peters, and several others who do not appear in the subsequent transactions.

It is reported that the horses were securely tied, but on that point authentic evidence is lacking.

The battery commanders reached Bouçonville and parted company, each repairing to his own little back lot along the hill to devise means for shooting the wily Heinie. They did not meet again until the next day. Captain Wheeler's business was soonest finished. The position assigned to him was next

to a road crossing and almost any topographer can identify a crossroads on the map. In five minutes the captain had placed a dot on his battle chart and was trudging along home.

Had he walked there would have been no story, no mystery, and the war would be the more regrettable in the loss of two of its most remarkable documents. But as the captain was starting over the hill back to Raulecourt and his waiting thoroughbred, there came along the regimental side car headed in the same direction. The driver offered a lift all the way to camp and the captain embarked.

As he passed the battery position he left orders with the first sergeant to pick up his horse at Raulecourt. There his active connection with the affair ends.

That evening the sergeant arrived at Raulecourt and began to look for the horse. He found it straying through the deserted main street of the village in company with another, better looking horse. With prompt decision he dismounted from the animal that had brought him to Raulecourt, clambered aboard the better of the pair he had found and set out at a trot for camp, leading the captain's nag behind him.

All of which is a crab-fashion narrative of the mystery. By which time the dénouement is evident and the plot of the piece is guessable.

On the following morning (yesterday) all battery commanders in the regimental camp received a copy of the subjoined letter:

Battery C 124 F.A. Sept. 5, 1918
From C.O. Battery C. 124 F.A.
To C.O. Batteries A, B, D, E, F.
Subject: Horse Thief.

GREETINGS

1.—On or about September 5, 1918, at or about 5 P.M., same date, an enlisted man from one of your respective batteries purloined, or words to that effect, a horse from a certain stable at or near Raulecourt.

2.—This was a bay horse, age about four years, weight between 1,000 and 1,100 pounds, U.S. No. 105, French No. 2286, branded on hoof, had a bobbed tail, clipped mane, and was rather thin. Had four good American shoes.

3.—In its place a sorrel nag was left.

4.—Having associated with this horse for some time I have naturally grown attached to him.

5.—I should like to have my old horse back again.

6.—Respectfully request that you return him to me.

Sincerely yours, *sans cheval*,

Russell M. Peters,
1st Lieut. Commanding Battery C

Captain Wheeler surrendered the horse.

During the night a French battery moved into the woods about a kilometer ahead of us bringing with it a whole picket line of what passes current in these parts for horse. The captain, fired by the success of the sergeant in the acquiring of mounts, sent a letter to the lieutenant suggesting that if the lieutenant wished another nag, one might be procured without difficulty and upon short notice.

The letter unfortunately has disappeared. We can judge of its contents and purpose only through the answer which arrived shortly thereafter:

HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
Battery C 124 F.A.
On the sixth day of
September
in the
Year of Our Lord 1918

From: Me
To: My Dear Charles.
Subject: The same plug.

1.—In view of the fact that my letter of this morning was answered so promptly and sweetly I am ready to forgive and forget. Now that the troubled waters have calmed and my horse has succeeded in bumming two good meals offen you, I am ready to talk business.

2.—Far be it from me, Charles, as you know, to do anything underhanded, such as stealing in the dark, and I am not only surprised but hurt that you should think of me in the light of an ordinary horse thief—like your man Hammond. But Charles, you interest me.

3.—During my trips to the Front I have continued my habit of traveling with my eyes open. Not because I thought the people along the road would think I was crazy if I kept them shut but because I was on the lookout for just such opportunities as those to which you referred. You know that often my first name is taken to be "Reconnaissance" by my French (our noble allies) friends on account of my eagle-like eye. Well, to get back to the story, I have noticed that a battery or perhaps a battalion of French (our noble allies) artillery, is camped on the road just around the corner. This organization has a number of fine horses which seem

to be in the best of health and would be a great addition to one of our picket lines. I do not believe it would be hard to exchange them, for I am led to believe that some of my stable men led, or rather carried, one of my racing animals over to said organization last night and arranged quite a nice trade. The French (our noble allies) have shown from that deal that they are terribly obliging. Of course you know it wouldn't be right for us to give them poor horses, but as you say "share and share alike," for we want them to get in for the fireworks along with us.

4.—So it will be all right with me if you send down that rotten horse thief of yours to our stable, and my men will instruct him in the business of diplomacy and trading so that perhaps even he can arrange a swap with the French (our gallant allies). So be it. As you say "in union there is strength," so perhaps we can both profit. Who knows?

5.—We'll let it go at that. Wishing you the best of luck and a nice new horse in the near future and reminding you that robbing a friend's stable is not considered the best of etiquette, I am yours, with a lily,

RUSSELL
Peters

Prepare for Action

Camouflage

The Front, Bouçonville, *September 5.*—What ho! the joy of pulling a fish net through a barbed wire fence in the dark!

One who has never done such a thing cannot know anything at all about the art of camouflage. He may be as wise as an owl concerning the physical properties of light—an expert photographer, woodsman and guesser (the best possible combination of qualities to make a perfect camoufleur) but if he has never been called upon to disentangle wire and fish net he has missed the basic elements of the business.

We are in Bouçonville to stay now. The firing battery moved up last night . . . that is, the men of the firing battery. As soon as we have prepared some holes for the guns they will be hauled up to us by the echelon and we shall remain here until the big push is over—unless, of course, Heinie takes a notion to shell us out.

At 7 o'clock to-night the detail reported at the crossroads to put up the camouflage nets and to rescue the scattered ammunition.

Enter Sergeant Camouflage looking like the chief canvas man in a circus and accompanied by a nondescript army bearing poles, stakes, axes, ropes, coiled wire and huge bundles of green stuff. There was considerable delay while the director opened up his bag of tricks. The coil of wire developed more

ends than an octopus. A man was placed at each end while the sergeant remained holding a loop at the center. Then the thing began to resemble a Maypole.

There was this elemental difference, however: if the merry villagers on the outer circumference attempted to move so much as a foot, let alone engage in an appropriate dance step, the sergeant howled many eloquent curses.

So far the whole performance was as mysterious as a French range table. No one except perhaps the sergeant knew whither it tended or what the climax was to be. The dark came down, an impenetrable gloom with a hint of rain in it. One became aware more by intuition than by actual observation that there were eight radial wires sticking out from the central loop. One gathered from the sergeant's emphatic superlatives that opposite wires were to be stretched taut, that each wire was to be equidistant from those on either side of it—a difficult problem for the cheery workers who no longer could see their own hands.

Gradually it was made clear that once staked out and boosted on poles, the wires would appear as an elevated spider web across which the camouflage net was to be stretched. So far so good.

"Stretch that north wire more," commanded the sergeant. Three wire pullers promptly pulled.

"Not that one, damn it," was the prompt criticism. So the three pullers quit pulling and four other pullers took up their mission.

"You over there quit pullin'," suggested the sergeant. Whereat all the wires slackened unanimously and the loop in the center snarled.

Somehow the web finally got itself staked out and

the square net was drawn over it with one corner pointing in the supposed direction of fire—in other words toward the amorphous mass of Mont Sec.

It was all a blind man's game. Clouds were bunching more densely in the sky where the moon should have been and a square net has no less than seventy-five corners when one handles it by instinct for the first time.

Once it was stretched and its ropes laid parallel to the wires, there arose a new series of difficulties. Any attempt to raise the center poles promptly pulled out the stakes at the corners. The stakes were driven in again—deeper this time. Then one after another they split and had to be replaced.

But even the perversity of a camouflage net can't last forever. There came a time—about the dozenth attempt—when the stakes held, the wires stayed in place and the green trellis arose from the ground on its poles, as smooth and square as a table top.

The sergeant looked at it critically, ranging his discerning eye across the gloom from one corner to the other.

"Have to do," he grunted reluctantly. "Looks rotten. The Dutch'll pick it off first thing. I'll come around to-morrow and straighten it. . . . Looks rotten. . . ."

The topmost point of the net was only about four feet off the ground—not high enough to permit any great comfort in the digging of the pits for guns and personnel—but it provided a very decent storage for a lot of ammunition that lay naked and unashamed on the south side of the road. These boxes were carried over and laid in piles toward the edges of the net. A second net was stretched over the stake that

marked the position of the fourth piece and eventually the extra thousand rounds was under cover.

Coffee was brought around in a marmite can at midnight—a welcome gift when the mists begin to penetrate one's O.D.

The men filled canteens and cups and sat about on the shell boxes in our new-built arbor glad of a respite. The coffee was hot. It cut a trail of warmth all the way from one's tongue to one's belt. Already the prospects for the construction of emplacements seemed more cheerful.

Suddenly one man started, his tin cup half way to his mouth. Unconsciously every *soldat* under the net came instantly to the alert. Somewhere out beyond the barbed wire of the trench system toward Raulecourt a Klaxon had sounded.

"Gas!" The Klaxon screamed again. Another town picked up the alarm and then another.

"Gas!" The shrieking message was passed all along the front—Raulecourt, Rambucourt, Xivray, Beaumont—and out beyond where the crescent of the sector swung on toward Metz. Back again it came to Bouçonville.

The doughboys at the crossroads had heard the call and the wild warning echoed among the ruins in a panic-stricken accellerando.

"Gas!"

Coffee was forgotten. It spilled in cascades over the ammunition boxes as unskilled hands flew to the once-despised gas masks.

An intangible, stealthy death was abroad in the mists—a death that no mere bravery could hope to combat. The men struggled briefly with nose clip,

headband and mouthpiece . . . then sat huddled in silent groups. For a time at least the deadly peril was over. . . .

The alarm puzzled me. We had had no face-to-face experience with gas warfare but we had been taught certain elemental things about it and much of this wild fanfare seemed a violation of the rules. Not a shell had landed in our sector—therefore the Boche artillery could not have been responsible for the alarm. There seemed to be no wind—in which event a cloud gas attack was out of the question.

In the midst of this rumination there came the sound of a fourgon clattering up the road.

"Giddap, mule," bawled a spirited voice. "Giddap you soandso . . . and what the hell!" Now obviously no such oratory ever percolated through a mask—for all of which this hardy mule skinner seemed to be quite alive. First one man and then another tested for gas and presently came the order to remove masks. Wet face pieces were dried, and gagged tongues loosened.

There was more coffee in the fireless cooker—which was a blessing. The feeling that death had been close persisted in spite of the vocal muleteer and his mules and his bad language. Coffee was more than a warm liquid now. It had become a reviving stimulant.

So another ten minutes passed. The level of the coffee in the tank dropped rapidly and the memory of the gas alarm became steadily more remote. We were about ready to return to work when I noticed that my eyes were smarting and that there was a hot, tingling sensation in the back of my throat.

Sergt. Ruckel, chief of the fourth section, turned suddenly from the coffee can—and he too sniffed.

"Lieutenant," he said, "my eyes hurt."

"So do mine," broke in an excited voice—and after that all the eyes in the detail began to ache at once. Without further orders the gas masks reappeared.

The mule skinner came back down the road, not a whit worse for wear, cursing his luck and his mules—in this instance seemingly interdependent—but his unmasked oratory failed to reassure. There was gas abroad. How it had got there I for one was unable to say, but fifty pairs of smarting eyes bore testimony to its presence.

A mule skinner might be expected to live in a gas cloud when he had been known to survive so continuously his own language.

Still it seemed to be a matter worth investigating. I went out to the road to investigate—barking my shins on unseen boxes and narrowly escaping a broken neck in the ditch. I tested for gas. . . . There was none. The air of the valley was chill and damp but gasless. I passed the word.

This time the masks were removed reluctantly and almost immediately replaced without order.

Here was mystery. The spectacle of men entombing themselves in gas masks without a direct command was unbelievable yet there was certainly no cause for alarm.

With a few well chosen remarks I walked back to the emplacement. I stooped to get under the low corner of the net, misjudged its position and buried my face in it.

One sniff and the truth was mine.

The net was saturated with fresh paint and turpentine. Voilá!

Life in the Line

The Front, Bouçonville, *September 6.*—The infantry kitchen to which we have been assigned for meals is quite enough a product of war to satisfy the most enthusiastic soldier in the outfit. It is housed in an ancient barn with four walls and half a roof. The floor is full of shell holes and coated with clay slime. During the hours at which we eat, the place is as dark as the clothes closets of Erebus.

A water cart stands near the door. One meets it broadside on entering. In an adjacent corner is a rolling kitchen with a table made of boxes and planks. On one end of the table a candle flickers in the depths of a soap box. It throws a feeble half-light on the shadowy line that files past the cooks for mess and throws uncanny reflections on to the wall.

During the past fifteen minutes, perhaps a hundred men have stepped in out of the dripping night and marched along the table extending their mess kits for the succulent Willy or the gleaming gold fish.

They are here somewhere now, sitting in corners, on rocks or on the rims of shell holes. One is aware of their presence now and then when a cigarette glows in an unexpected quarter. But they have come in silence and in silence they stay.

There is no order against talking but the psychological effect of the dim light and the patches of gray sky pressing down on the holes in the roof is invincible. The general impression—the effluvium—of the place is sepulchral.

. . . . . .

By day the ruins that we share with the chipmunks and bats are not so bad to look at—if one could do his investigating without thought of Mont Sec.

There is still enough greenery about to give the place something of the appearance of the abbey remains of England. Not far north of us the Wœvre plain comes to an end and the rolling hills step away from it. There are groves about the villages and trees along the highways.

A little lake stretches along the north side of Bouçonville. It comes to an end on the east immediately behind the building where our advance detail is billeted. A dike or a causeway crosses it northward.

The north shore about an eighth of a mile distant is forested and beautiful. Through open spaces in the foliage one can catch glimpses of a ruined château and of course in the distant background the inevitable Mont Sec.

Lieut. Peters' battery has been assigned to positions in the woods across the lake. The problem of getting ammunition to his emplacements is becoming more serious as each hour draws us nearer to battle. Wagons cannot cross the causeway in daylight inasmuch as the road is in plain view of Mont Sec. Even at night they cannot get all the way to the battery. They have to halt at the old château gate—nearly a quarter of a mile away from the spot where he has put in the stakes for his guns. From here the shells must be carried by man power—two at a time.

Battery A approached a solution to Lieut. Peters' problem yesterday when the kitchen detail, filling the coffee can with water from the lake, happened to find an old boat. Peters seized upon it at onee, ran a rope from shore to shore and started to operate an ammunition ferry. The trees gave plenty of defilade to the north and he had to fear only the aëroplane observation that of late has not bothered us much. About a

thousands rounds had been freighted across before disaster came.

In midlake on an outbound trip the bottom dropped out of the scow. One box of fuses, eighteen shells and one sergeant were precipitated into the cold water while Battery A's coffee detail stood on the bank and cheered.

The sergeant came to the suface and then with laudable enterprise dived to make observations that might be of use in recovering the shells. He came up a second time clutching something white in his right hand. A few swimming strokes brought him to shallow water and he waded ashore. The jeering suddenly ceased. The white thing that he had picked up in his dive was a human skull.

The scow was salvaged by a squad of volunteers, dragged ashore and repaired by a crew of mechanics. Then it was pushed out in midlake while naked divers went down after the lost munitions. They recovered all but one of the shells but that phase of the search did not interest the spectators. The whole bottom of the lake is covered with skeletons.

It is not hard to visualize how they got there in the mad panic that followed the slaughter on Mont Sec. Swept down from the hill the recently victorious forty thousand had retreated in formless panic to the south. Some of them had reached the causeway. Others had come crashing through the woods about the château to find themselves pushed into the lake by the fugitives who followed them. Some had won through to the south shore. . . . The wounded had stayed there.

Battery A is now hauling its coffee water from a well in Broussey.

. . . . . .

They brought in a German prisoner to-night. All of the men not too exhausted to leave their bunks came out into the street to take a look at him.

He was not at all like the pictures of the ideal Boche. For one thing his uniform was a strange mixture—an American helmet, French blouse, Boche breeches and boots. For another his entire equipment consisted of five sacks of American tobacco and American tobacco is not generally considered an article of issue behind the German lines.

A patrol of automatic riflemen came upon him wandering aimlessly and unarmed in No Man's Land near Richecourt early this morning. The helmet and blouse they found too puzzling to permit an ordinary disposition of the case. So they brought him in to battalion headquarters for interrogation.

The prisoner, seemingly perfectly self-possessed, stood at attention before his inquisitors.

"Where did you get this helmet?" inquired the battalion adjutant in slow but recognizable German.

"Off an American prisoner," came the prompt answer in passable English. "Got this coat the same way."

"Can you explain your presence in our lines and in our uniform?"

"I wasn't in your lines when they caught me. I wanted to surrender. I am hungry. If I came over in a German uniform I had a fine chance of getting shot."

"It's true," said a sergeant. "It's true what he said. We bumped into him about half a mile out in the weeds in front of the wire."

"Then how did he get the tobacco?" countered the adjutant.

Strange things have happened in this war. There

have been tales of spies and of the dire methods necessary for the suppression of their activities. There have been those who wondered why at times a German concentration has met with so little resistance. Well here's the Boche prisoner's yarn:

"I started out night before last to find the American lines. I know this sector. I have been in here for nearly four years and I had a compass to guide me. I went out into No Man's Land and waited for a patrol to come and take me. None came. I got cold and started out to locate and American sentry.

"The lines around Richecourt and Xivray have changed a little and I had crossed the first-line trenches before I knew it.

"I went on south and came to the town just east of here. (Rambucourt). There were many Americans there but none of them paid any attention to me. I went into a canteen and bought some tobacco. I had French money. No one questioned me.

"I thought about surrendering. Then I remembered that I might be shot as a spy if anybody discovered me behind the lines in this uniform. So I went back the way I had come.

"I slept in a shell hole all day yesterday. Early this morning the American patrol came by. I stopped it and surrendered.''

The adjutant gasped. So did the rest of us.

And this is war!

. . . . . .

Our home—Don Stier's home and mine—is a muddy dugout in the deserted third line. It is not deep. The roof is just a little beneath the surface of the slope in which the trenches are dug. The little coop was built as a machine gun nest and a slot in

the end wall looks out upon Mont Sec and the tumbled puzzle of barbed wire that has been No Man's Land for four years. The ceiling drips a bit and the place is inhabited chiefly by red snails that leave gooey trails on the plank walls. But for all that we are not uncomfortable. Three layers of railroad iron, crisscrossed in the roof where we can see them, give us a pleasant feeling of security.

Some trophies of war still lie scattered about—a Hotchkiss clip, a brace of grenades, a few empty cartridges. But tall grass has grown over the machine gun slot and there is moss on the rotting wooden threshold. Gerry has not been active here for some time.

We are fairly happy in our new home. Now and then a pound of chocolate, purchased at the Salvation Army canteen in Bouçonville, arrives to make life worth living. And there are times when the infantry kitchen issues doughnuts with the always available coffee.

This is the sort of habitation we were always told is part and parcel of war. We should have been disappointed if placed in other surroundings—should have felt that we weren't actually in the big scrap if so much as an inch of sticky mud were lacking. We almost—not quite—feel ourselves cheated by the absence of the festive cootie.

All night we work. At daylight we disperse across the bridge for a breakfast that we are too tired to eat. Then we plod on to our billets—the men to their barn—Don and I to our hole.

All day we sleep and the crack of doom wouldn't rouse us from our exhaustion.

Last night we helped haul ammunition to Battery C. Someone had blundered as usual and our gas

shells had been given to Lieut. Peters while we had been stowing away his H.E.

The exchange was effected by means of ration wagons and fourgons dragged by hand across the dike at the end of Skeleton Lake. Some shells were dropping on the road over near Xivray and the men were inclined to be nervous.

This was our first meeting with gas shells and the cannoneers did not appreciate the odor of banana oil, thick, sweet, pervasive, that followed the green projectiles in an invisible cloud.

The night was bright enough to permit observation from Mont Sec—a thing to be feared. The gas Non-Com. called attention to the situation about midnight as he pointed to the front of a ruined building. The moon and three stars were shining with spectral effect through the front window of an upstairs bed room.

"Not everybody can have the moon in his house," commented Sergt. Murphy.

"Common enough," answered a corporal who was playing in the rôle of off lead horse at the wagon tongue. "It's a tight house that doesn't let the moonlight through it."

The Guns Come Up

Under Fire

THE FRONT, BOUÇONVILLE, *September 7.*—I was awakened this morning by the pained curse of a visitor who had butted his head against one of the ceiling timbers.

Still more than half asleep I rolled out of my blankets and made out the figure of the top sergeant silhouetted against the sunshine in the doorway. The top quit cursing, saluted and extended a paper. I knew without looking at it what the message was, but I read hurriedly:

"Get position finished with all possible speed. Guns come up to-night. Fireworks to-morrow sure. Wheeler."

I looked at my watch. It showed nine o'clock. I had been asleep two hours and a half.

The men turned out reluctantly.

There was some fun, to be sure, in the prospect of getting the guns in action at last after all the months spent in seemingly aimless training. But however willing the spirit might be, the jolly old flesh was dog-tired—exhausted. The prospect was not improved by the knowledge that according to the schedule of two meals a day nothing to eat would be forthcoming until nightfall.

Still they turned out, shouldered pick and shovel and marched over the bridge in single file at 100-meter intervals to the camouflage nets.

The digging of the gun position was simple enough.

The architect of the pit was Sergt. Mull, who had helped build a sample casemate at Camp Logan. The original of its type had been well favored during the first year of the war. Recently we have heard that it has lost its popularity. But we don't know much about any other kind.

The emplacement was to consist of two parts—a square hole for ammunition and a similar square hole for the gun. The personnel was to find working room in such space as was not occupied by hardware.

The sergeant, used to Camp Logan where nails cost five *sous* a pound and timber was to be had for the hauling, had some advanced ideas regarding beams and braces and sills. However, there was small opportunity to put them into practice. Three holes of the size contemplated would not have accommodated a thousand rounds of shell. Some ammunition under the most favorable circumstances would have to be left out in the open. Why then take the trouble to bury any of it?

The gun emplacements were things of more immediate necessity. The third and fourth sections started at once to level a place for the wheels and to sink trail holes.

The digging had been in progress for perhaps an hour with nothing to disturb the serenity of a sunshiny day when a squealing shell passed over head on its way from Germany.

The trajectory seemed to be squarely above our position. The intent of the battery commander who laid the gun was still a matter of conjecture.

The shell hit just over the ridge behind our crossroads—not far from our sleeping dugout—and it detonated with a businesslike smash and tossed up a

tall column of smoke, black dirt and fragments of wire. The men stood petrified. Being shelled was a new experience. There was nothing in the book about what to do under H.E. fire. So very wisely they awaited developments.

They had not long to wait.

A second shell followed the first and exploded this time at a point near the top of the crest where it could be seen from the road. Gerry had shortened his range.

The chief of the first section dropped his shovel and stared across the highway at the smoking crater.

"Who's he shootin' at?" he inquired of himself in a voice that could be heard above the echoes of the burst. "He's shootin' at us, that's who he's shootin' at." He dived out from under the net and streaked rapidly along the ditch toward Broussey.

As a matter of fact I was inclined to believe that "Tack" had been right . . . the more so when an unidentified aëroplane appeared from the north and skimmed along above the American sector. One at a time I sent the men into the old infantry trenches. There seemed to be no good reason for sitting here and taking it.

Meantime the firing went on, always near the same spot, while the aëroplane signaled changes in deflection and range with a machine gun.

No subsequent shelling can possibly produce the effect of this one even though the initiation to warfare be bloodless and apparently without result.

I crawled up to the top of the ridge and lay belly down watching the performance. The center of impact seemed to be a crossing on the Broussey road and there was some consolation in that. The whole business was an adjustment and Gerry, thank

heaven, was considerate enough to register on a point where he would do no damage to anybody.

Of course, there was the possibility that with the adjustment completed he would turn his attention to targets marked on his map and give us a run for our money. But there would be time enough to worry about that when he should get around to it.

The men went back to work readily enough. The fatigue of the morning seemed to have left them. They dug on ceaselessly until the setting of the sun over behind Broussey revived their interest in dinner.

There is a line in Huckleberry Finn about a "road that was still and Sunday-like." Such a road is the highway between Broussey and Bouçonville in the daytime. The dark has hardly come down, however, before the night life of the battle front is swarming over it—an endless procession of trucks and wagons with an occasional water cart or kitchen. The trucks travel without lights and keep to the road by some miraculous intervention of Providence. The wagons keep on the highway through the instinct of the horses and mules.

The first of this wheeled centipede is crossing the bridge into town. Our guns are on the way up.

Flares and star shells are streaking the sky to the north and west. Heinie is burning the midnight magnesium to find out what is going on. There has been no shelling so far to-night.

An unexpected addition has appeared in the traffic at the crossroads—a line of infantry in single file, silent, shadowy, scarcely discernible.

The sentry at the bridge has located the head of the column and is conducting a discussion on the merits of passwords and countersigns.

I came out of the shell dump just in time to hear:

"Advance friend and give the countersign!"

"I don't know any countersign," was the pleased response. "Never heard of one. Don't give a damn. This is the Eighteenth Infantry, Buddy, and we're going by or knock your block off, you hick."

Click! The rifle is brought from port to present.

"Advance, Friend!"

The shadowy column moves on again.

. . . . . .

The guns have come up.

It is difficult to put into words the influence they brought with them.

The arrival was quiet—none of the "Double sections left oblique! Gallop! Yoh! On left into line! Yoh!" that put the tingle in one's blood at Logan—but the thrill was there just the same.

Foremost in everyone's mind was the realization that we *were* at last in position to strike back. We have become a factor in the jolly old carnage. We have the means and intention of making ourselves felt.

An orderly stepped out of the black into the second section's ammunition shed and reported that four 75s were blocking the road. With one accord we ran out to meet them.

They had been pulled off to the side of the highway, the four guns, and were recognizable only as a deeper shadow in the heavy blackness of the traffic jam. There was no noise save the clinking of harness chains and an occasional curse from a caisson corporal in the ammunition train behind.

"Unlimber!"

The command was passed from man to man in a whisper. In half a minute the snapping of pintles told that the order had been carried out.

"Drive on!" The horses, heroic in size as seen in the half light, pulled into the middle of the road and were gone. A dozen men were at the trails of "Old Betsy" and "Loco Lizzie."

"Heave—yoh!"

The Germans in the listening post on Mont Sec must have been startled at this outburst of American Chinese. It was not repeated owing to the speedy arrival of two majors and a lieutenant.

"You can heave all you want and be quick about it," said one of the majors. "But go back to Raulecourt to do your Yoh-ing."

"Go to hell," was the original but startling reply of Sergt. Ruckel.

"What!" simultaneously ejaculated both majors and the lieutenant.

"You heard me," said the sergeant who seemed to be getting somewhat impatient. "I said 'Go to Hell!'"

Then a star shell lit up the gold leaf on the shoulder of the nearest major. The section chief gasped politely.

"Beg your pardon, sir," he said promptly. "I didn't recognize your voice—didn't know there were any battalion officers up here."

And there was no disputing it. If as Lieut. Hudson avers anybody can be a general officer in the dark then surely the converse should be true also. Both majors retired grumblingly and were forgotten.

The fourth piece was twirled about in the road with the muzzle pointed toward Mont Sec. Another push and the heavy wheels cleared the gutter. The gun dropped down the little grade almost on its own impulse. The crew did a silent, orderly war dance which lost none of its energy because of the

fact that the dancers could not see each other. "Old Betsy" was poking her slim nose over the sandbag ramparts all ready to take up the argument with Heinie across the way.

In similar fashion the other guns went in—smoothly without noise, confusion or exceptional interference from the high commanders.

We have all read of the heroic gunners at Mons and Ypres who dragged their guns for miles and miles by hand after the horses had been killed. There has never been any such tale about a brave engineer who pushed his steam roller ten kilometers after the coal gave out—a neglected opportunity—and logical, too. A small steam roller doesn't weigh much more than a field gun and is less likely to bury itself in the mud.

The breathless young men who have just finished dragging the first and second pieces into the orchard after a hundred-yard push on a hard road would prefer a steam roller. The man who invented the 75 probably figured on using horses to pull it—that's why he put an oat bin in the caisson limber.

Midnight.—There will be some difficulty in getting the first two sections placed to fire. The French built this platoon position for a pair of 90s. And there is our difficulty.

The 90 in its essentials is a gun similar to the Napoleon of the civil war. It is a breech-loading rifle, true enough, but its recoil is not absorbed by springs or oil or air. One lays the gun, stands clear and pulls the string. Whereat the 90 kicks a vicious kick and retires from the firing line. Then one pushes it back into battery and starts over again.

This recalls the story of Lieut. O'Brien, who retreated from the battle of Palo Alto by means of the

kick of his own guns, but the connection is not quite logical.

The French have attached a check to the impulsive 90 which the brass Napoleons of O'Brien's battery lacked. Which brings us back to our difficulty. When the French artillery was stuck in here friction between trail and ground was harnessed by means of a platform built to match the gun spade. The spade of the 90 is wide and flat, giving a traction that eventually stops the recoil. In fixed positions it appears to have been the practice to construct platforms sloping upward and to the rear. Thus when the gun steps back gravity is added to friction in taking up the kick and returning it to the battery. And the laying of the gun is scarcely less rapid than that of the 75.

But by reason of this platform a 90 emplacement is useless as a position for a 75. To get elevation with the 75 shooting at long ranges the trail spade has to be considerably lower than the wheels. The line of recoil is down—not up. Placed on a 90 platform and leveled a 75 might shoot 2,000 yards and then again it might not.

So the first and second sections are face to face with the task of tearing out a heavy square of timber work and digging a four foot trail hole. The prospect is not encouraging.

Rambucourt is having trouble again. Gas this time. The firing is intense and the "plop-plop-plop" sound of the shells gives the impression of cavalry charging over sticky clay.

There is a slight taint of chlorine in the air here but the wind is in the wrong direction for a cloud gas attack.

The first platoon is only slightly concerned in the

gas situation. Phosgene looks like a pleasant way out in contrast to the back-breaking struggle with iron-bound timbers. They wield crowbar and pick perfunctorily. Once artillery was a service of quick thought, snap judgment and initiative. Now it is the same as sewer digging except that the hours are longer.

One A.M.—It has begun to rain. More joy for the first platoon.

Two A.M.—Captain Wheeler has arrived and taken over the infantry telephone dugout to the rear of the orchard. That in itself is good news. We now have a warm place to retire to between dry spells and other periods of excitement. But the joy of the occasion does not stop there. The show has been postponed. All we have to do between now and daylight is unload a thousand rounds of gas and smoke shell. It is still raining.

Three A.M.—Darker than the soul of a Prussian.

Some shells have arrived. Nobody knows how many. The carriers locate the caissons by running into them at the bend in the road. They carry the shells back to the gun positions, one under each arm, slipping and falling in the mud. They are bumping into one another out there in the road now. Some excellent though hardly original expressions and the metallic sound of dropped ammunition indicate the whereabouts of each new collision. The smell of banana oil is everywhere.

How the caissons managed to keep on the road in this will always be a mystery. No tunnel could be darker. The white highway is blotted out in the gloom five yards ahead. Identification of road crossings is impossible.

It is colder and still raining.

Five A.M.,—Daylight.—The men have gone up into town for breakfast and sleep.

Don and I have been working as a camouflage detail to eliminate the traces of a hard night.

Shells thrown hurriedly into weed clumps and ditches have been covered with branches, nets, and burlap. The guns in the orchard have been pushed far back under the trees and draped with nets. New paths—unavoidable result of the dark—have been camouflaged with wire mesh and bits of rope.

The finished job does not look particularly successful from a ground observer's point of view. The artificiality of the carnival display, the obvious squareness of the covering over paths and ammunition dumps seem to invite Gerry's attention.

Freddy Gomes, the camouflage sergeant, looked at the mélange of raffia, weeds and wire and cocked his eye with the air of an art critic.

"May work," he hazarded dubiously. "If only we had enough of that wire netting now, and some good poles and—"

"If only we had a steamboat ticket for New York," interrupted Sergt. Ruckel, "we wouldn't need your fish net and weeds. . . ." Which to a large extent is true. Fish net and weeds are useless in New York.

"Lay, But Do Not Load"

The Front, Bouçonville, *September 8.*—Dug all day with rain dripping in rivulets from the nets. Tin hats have one virtue. . . . They are waterproof. . . . Otherwise the bedraggled cannoneers who returned to the billets to-day would be past all salvaging.

Discovered this morning that three kinds of shell

were delivered last night. It will take a day's work to sort them.

Don Stier laid the guns and the sections put up their aiming stakes to-day. Donald had one sweet time of it. The rains have brought plenty of water to the creek that lies under our muzzles. The ground was soggy when we came in. Now it is a quaking bog. He had to slosh around in it with his aiming circle to get a sight on the first and third pieces.

The episode of the Rambucourt church steeple was repeated in front of the first platoon. A back sight tended to show that Lambert North was one thing on the map and quite another at the guns. The error was a good fifteen mils.

All morning he worked at it hunting new places for his orientation and always the error cropped up. Inasmuch as we are scheduled to shoot by the map and without preliminary adjustment it was obvious that something would have to be done—even to moving the guns. Along toward noon he solved his problem. He had failed, it seems, to allow for the magnetic declination of his pistol and tin hat. He took them off and laid them on the bridge wall. After that the compass behaved.

Did a little scouting for a possible observation post this evening. Nearly got shot when we ran into a barbed wire entanglement hung with homemade cowbells fashioned of Willy cans filled with small rocks.

The First Division infantry is up ahead of us now. I wonder if they feel the sweet confidence in us that we feel in them. They are having a hell of a time.

The trench system in front of Xivray is largely caved in. It seems to be virtually without deep dugouts, drainage or decent firing steps. Water was six inches over the duckboards where there were any

duckboards and the poor damned doughboys were sleeping in it like stranded mermaids. Probably they stood up for the first couple of nights. Now they are so nearly dead that they are snoring although half-submerged. No wonder men will fight against shell and gas and machine gun fire. Any man would go to hell to get out of a place like this.

Turned in early to-night. The men can't be driven further without rest.

The Poilus Arrive

THE FRONT, BOUÇONVILLE, *September 9.*—Drizzling this evening.

It was clear for a few minutes about an hour ago and the Boche aëroplanes came over in force. Was on the other side of Skeleton Lake near the old château when the first of the fleet appeared.

A battery of the 123rd heavies is in a position near Pete's with a P.C. in the ruins of an old barn. One would never suspect the presence of a battery from the number of men in sight. There were only one or two of them when I arrived and these two were sent romping for cover when Capt. Bickle heard the hum of the aëroplane.

The 123rd suffered considerably in the bombardment of Rambucourt and its personnel has learned a useful lesson.

There is a story in circulation that may or may not be true about a man of the 123rd who dived underneath a camouflage net to escape the shells. An umbrella would have afforded better protection, but there were no umbrellas in that part of France.

He had been hidden with all the skill of the desert ostrich for perhaps fifteen minutes when an incen-

diary shell lit on the opposite corner of the net and set it afire.

To save his hide the *soldat* had to crawl back into the open where he spent the better part of the evening orating about the need for asbestos camouflage. A mind of that sort has many convolutions.

The digging is almost finished.

The first section can get 30 degrees elevation with the trail hole as it is now. Six inches deeper will bring them to the maximum. So 9 o'clock has been set for the conclusion of the night's work. And I'm going to bed. Now!

Ten P.M.—No more sleep.

Somebody hath murdered sleep. . . . Murdered it with huge portions of the French language, the smell of red wine and a press of crowding bodies that would make a Paris subway car seem like an empty wagon.

Don and I had just dropped into the drug-like slumber that comes of utter fatigue, when somebody stumbled down the passageway, bumped his head on the inevitable beam and fell over on top of us.

There followed the shuffling of many feet, an excited jabbering of argot and the striking of a sulphur match with a ghastly glow and a still more ghastly smell.

"*Deux officiers Americains*," some one explained to some one else and gradually the truth broke upon us. We were being dispossessed.

I sat up in my bed roll and looked up the passage. A young poilu was grinning down at me.

"*Officier*?" he inquired.

"*Oui*," I replied in my faultless accent. "*Oui*."

"*Americain*?" he asked. And again came the truthful answer: "*Oui*."

"*Deux?*" he pursued. And once more we pleaded guilty.

Whereat he laughed a guffaw that must have bent the railroad iron in the roof and sat himself down in the mud.

"*Deux officiers,*" he chortled. "*Deux officiers, et dix soldats, et un abri.*"

It tickled the Gallic soul of him to see ten blue-clad machine gunners dumped in forcibly on top of of two officers who already filled the dugout to capacity—twelve where there should only have been two. It was a situation too delicious for words. So he rocked back and forth in the mud, shaking with laughter while the remainder of the *dix soldats* echoed his mirth.

There was nothing to do but move. For some reason or other the French were taking over the reserve positions in this sector and artillerymen had no business in an infantry trench.

So we got up—which means that we pushed back our blankets. And we got dressed—which means that we tied our boot laces. And we started out into the world again.

About a ton of baggage had to be moved, for a paternalistic government insists on loading the artillery up with a dozen or more replicas of the Lick telescope that probably will never get any nearer the Front than the first salvage pile.

Don had stored all the instruments here and we had to move them to provide room for the *dix soldats*. We were still pondering on the best possible solution of the problem when the *dix soldats* decided it for us. They moved the stuff themselves. They deposited their machine guns and such trash in the mud. Each picked up a couple of leather cases and carried them

down the road to a tin shed behind the first platoon emplacement. There they placed the things well back out of the rain and retired gracefully, still laughing. It seems to us that the chief ingredient in the wonderful French resistance is an unfailing sense of humor.

"*Deux officiers, dix soldats*!" The third line trenches still are echoing with it.

Which recalls some sprightly news that Phil Newman brought from the colonel's mess via Bobby Stafford who is now Major Rearden's adjutant. Conversation at the mess seems to have been concerned principally with the official personnel and in due course with me.

"He'll never make a successful officer," the colonel is quoted as having said. "He doesn't take things seriously. The war is a joke to him."

Well, ho hum, forewarned is forearmed, and I shall try to cultivate that sour look so favored by the breezy goats who write the drill regulations. I have never failed yet in carrying out an order nor getting the men to do the endlessly sappy things the higher command wants done. But I am not successful because I still can laugh at official boobery and dispense with the dumb, ponderous paraphernalia of the golf expert.

I came up from the ranks, and I know that the discipline of Battery A—in so far as discipline means a willingness and skill in obeying orders—is the best in the brigade. I wonder if the fair-haired boys at the colonel's mess ever heard about a thing called "morale."

Orders have come in that all work is to be rushed to completion at once. There wasn't much thrill

attaching to the glad news. The boys are still preparing for the fireworks that were to have been set off three days ago. Apathetically they have decided to work on all night.

An ammunition train just passed our corner. It made noise enough to wake the dead.

It seems that a mule with more than average intelligence took offense at the sentry's face. The mule balked and the driver spoke to him in his native language.

"Shut up," roared the sentry. "Don't you know the Dutch can hear every word you're saying?"

"Who gives a damn?" was the courteous response. "They can't understand nothin' I'm a-tellin' this here mule."

Which of course was the truth. Even a crossroads sentry could see that there was little military significance in the confidences between a mule-skinner and his mule. After some ten minutes of volcanic dispute, the mule relented and the wagons rattled on over the bridge.

Lieut. Stier shook his head.

"If the Germans don't know what's going on here they're dead both ways from the ears," he said. Then he reprimanded a man in the third section who had started to whistle, "Where do we go from here, boys?"

Action Front!

Shadows Ahead

The Front, Bouçonville, *September 10, Eight A.M.*—The Boche avions were over just after daybreak to-day. We barely managed to get under cover.

It begins to look as if there might be more action pretty soon. The American infantry moved out last night and the French have taken over this sector.

Our kitchen came in simultaneously with the dawn.

We heard it heading in our direction all the way from Broussey but weren't able to identify it until it was almost up to the fourth piece emplacement. Until that time the noise might have signaled the approach of anything—a runaway juggernaut, a chariot race or a frolicsome locomotive. The rattlety-bang of loose cans could be heard all the way to Metz. The gun crews knocked off work to watch the arrival of the din. Thus all the battery was lined up to give a fitting welcome when the rolling kitchen hove into view.

It clattered past, turned the corner on one wheel and shot up into town. Cornelius P. Turner, whose previous knowledge of charioteering had been acquired by punching holes in doughnuts, clung to the flying vehicle with both hands. His mouth was tightly closed to prevent the spilling of loose teeth.

Then we discovered the reason for the haste.

A French kitchen was following closely upon the

heels of ours—and our scouts had located the only piece of waterproof roof in Bouçonville.

Two plus two, corrected for windage, barometric pressure and power lot, is generally four.

The Y.M.C.A. has moved out. The sad-faced geezer who was running it just folded his pants like the Arabs and silently stole away. The dawn's early light disclosed his dump unattended with all the windows and doors open and the stock still on the shelves for all and sundry who might care to lighten the burden of the day with a little looting. Major White took over the place. He intends to hold a closing out sale this afternoon if a battle or something does not prevent.

The Salvation Army still is in business over the way. The man in charge of the hut carried up a stock of chocolate from Raulecourt last night.

Sixteen o'clock.—(That means 4 P.M. on a civilized clock.) If this smash doesn't start soon the artillery is in for a trimming. D, E, and F are on the north side of the creek in front of us and a little to our left. They went in very close to some old casemated positions but were careful to keep a safe distance from the abandoned emplacements. Their guns were camouflaged and their ammunition distributed under cover according to the latest rules in the book.

But to-day take a look at their hill.

Squarely on the crest is a battery of 75s—a French battery—without so much as a branch of a tree to keep it safe from enemy observation. The French crews are piling their shells in the open, digging their trail holes in daylight while we look on astounded. What has become of the good old red bible that warned against footsteps in the mud as a certain give-

away in an aërial photo? Were is the cautious old battery commander of legendary fame who shot any of his men caught walking about the position? Where are all the old principles we learned at Sill and Ornans? Where is this "position warfare" we heard so much about?

Feenee, the whole lot of them. . . . And who cares?

Capt. Albert Sercomb of F is the colonel's idea of the serious-minded soldier. He went through all the prescribed motions in raising his camouflage nets and in marking out the paths by which ammunition was to be dragged in a shell at a time from the road. Most of this work he supervised himself lest his executive officer might slip up on some of the ritualistic detail.

He was standing at his position yesterday afternoon when the French battery clattered over the bridge and turned in alongside of him.

It was a pretty sight. These lads travel light and they travel fast. They did not bother to unlimber in the road and wait for a dark night so that the crews could push the guns up the hill. Ah, no. They did a neat column left and dropped their trails where they wanted them.

Their ammunition came in a *chariot de parc*—a big blue wagon that stood up over the crest like a house. A couple of stalwart veterans put their shoulders to the back of the driver's seat, straightened out their legs and kicked about a thousand rounds into the mud in less time than it took us to move one box.

In ten minutes the battery was laid. In eleven the first piece had fired and there was a black cloud at the corner of the cemetery wall of the town on the right slope of Mont Sec. The second piece fired—the third

and fourth. In ten minutes of firing an adjustment had been completed and the gun crews sat down to a frugal meal of bread and vin rouge.

"Well," said Sercomb, "I'll be damned. I certainly am glad that I had a chance to be here. I've always wondered just how much of this stuff is the bull. . . . "

As a matter of fact all of us who saw the show felt somehow that we had been sold out. . . . However, if that Heinie battery over beyond Lupemont starts to adjust on the French, the overs will get us.

Tanks are reported on the way up. The top cutter says several are scattered along the road through the woods behind Raulecourt.

The First Division infantry is on its way back here again. It will go in in front of us and to our right. A lot of the outfits got in last night and they probably had a poor night of it. The trenches are now like canals and most of the remaining *revetments* are caving in.

Just before the Battle, Mother

The Front, Bouçonville, *September 11, Ten A.M.*—This has been a hard night.

They say there's to be a battle to-morrow. Bring it on! What's a battle? Nothing but a blessed relief.

The battery is dug in sufficiently. The guns are in place and laid. . . . Little enough to tell about, but a result accomplished only after untold grief.

The third section is still at work and will be for the next two hours. At present the men are carrying a dozen steel I-beams up into the village. These beams

were dumped at our gate as part of the evening's festivities. It was discovered an hour ago that they belong to the colonel who is going to construct a dug-out somewhere.

Last night the third section grew weary with well-doing, shouldered picks and shovels and went home after midnight coffee. The section wasn't missed until the laying of the guns was checked this morning. Then it was unceremoniously hauled out of bed. Gold bricking is frowned upon in war time.

But I-beams and a sleepy gun squad were the least of our troubles. A trench mortar outfit unloaded guns, ammunition and one cart in the road in front of the second piece some time between midnight and dawn and got away without being caught. We had to stow the boxes out of sight.

Item: Don had the usual trouble making the compass needle behave when he went to check the laying of the first piece. He had sufficient presence of mind to leave off his tin hat and pistol but it took him an hour to discover that some 155s had come in just in front of the first platoon and across the creek. He maneuvered another hour to find a place between them where they did not affect his compass.

Item: The 123rd punched the time clock this morning without bothering to remove a pile of shells from the road. Our camouflage squad covered them up—as usual. The weather has favored us although at first glance we might not think so. Rain and fog have kept off the aëroplanes—else luck must assuredly have been on the side of the enemy. Of course the climatic conditions are far from a peace time ideal. It is still raining and cold. Most of us are wet to the skin and coughing. But there'll be no photographs to-day—and that is everything.

Gas gloves and Tissot masks have been issued to the battery.

A Tissot mask is a funny contrivance. It uses no nose clip or mouthpiece. Air is breathed in through valves under the eyepieces—an arrangement to prevent clouding. They are ideal masks for gun crews inasmuch as one can actually wear one and still see the bubble of the quadrant and the graduations on the sights. However, the wearer is subjected to an uncanny sensation. The draft in one's eyes is like that produced by an auto ride. The harder you breathe the greater the impression of speed. Many of the men prefer the old model. They are used to it.

The gas gloves turned out to be oilcloth mits for wear in the handling of our banana shells.

They say a paste designed to protect against mustard gas will be issued to-morrow if we are still here. Mustard—yellow-cross gas—seems to be about the only Boche weapon of which the men are really afraid. The fact that they have never smelled it or seen its effects does not increase their confidence in the outlook. They have heard the story of the forty odd men in the hospital on the Boucq road.

Sixteen o'clock.—Just awakened by Captain Wheeler's order:

"Get the men out and the shells allotted in proper proportions. Zero hour is at 5 A.M."

After all there is nothing to do but do it. Perhaps this time the guess may be right.

Seventeen o'clock.—Received some kindly advice from the battalion. The lads in that neighborhood apparently have the wind up. They are full of

stories about spies who run about the countryside ordering retreats. I am instructed that should any person in any uniform come romping up to me with such an order I am to shoot him on sight. . . . A sweet idea.

The First Battle

The Front, Bouçonville, *September 11, Ten P.M.*—There never was a more desolate setting for a battle.

It is raining in fitful spells that must mean hell to the doughboys up front. The men, too tired to talk, too tired to realize that their weary days of practice are about over—that living targets are moving a thousand meters or so beyond the defilade—dig on and on. The clink of spade striking rock or the swish of a pick in a puddle are the only sounds in a vast dark stillness.

Last night when hundreds of vehicles were passing our corner we could visualize our proximity to war. We could feel the immensity of this terrific trade in human life. We experienced the thrill of comradeship in it, of confidence in the great army behind us.

Now the road is a vast mud puddle. Not a single vehicle is passing over it except a two-wheeled cart that Tompkins has fashioned out of a wrecked *fourgon* to haul shells with. And there is a depressing loneliness in our position. We seem to be a forgotten unit in a forgotten sector. . . .

Not a shell is coming over from the German lines. One recalls now the cock-and-bull story that the Germans had a spy in Bouçonville and so refrained from firing on the town. But even Rambucourt is neglected to-night. God knows what the next few hours will bring.

The camouflage is down on the third piece. The soaked net proved too heavy a weight for the stakes. The men somehow crawled out from under the dripping, clinging snare and made vain attempts to fix it. The marshy ground refused to hold the stakes, the uprights wouldn't hold the wire, the net was beyond all stretching. . . .

Finally under orders, they threw the camouflage to one side, postponing repairs until daylight.

The chief mechanic has appeared on the scene with an aiming light—a bulky contraption consisting of two parts ammunition box and one part oil lamp. He is on his way now to the infirmary over the bridge to seek a window from which the light will be visible at all the guns.

"Tack," the chief of the first section, is peering through the gloom toward the village to check the result of the experiment.

There is a flicker out in the black. . . . A flash strong and brilliant but unsteady.

"What the hell?" inquires Tack as the gunner makes frantic and futile efforts to place the vertical cross hair of the sight on this ghostly light.

"Can't be done," snarls the gunner. "I can't get within five mils of it. It won't stay put long enough."

"Damn the luck!" suggests the sergeant. "Lieutenant, will you please come over here and look at this damned aiming light? . . ."

Nothing to do but go over and look at it. Just taking a squint across the sights when the drunken aiming light goes on another spree.

It was puzzling for a minute. Then the flashes began to space themselves into dots and dashes.

The first section has been trying to aim at a projector station.

"I get the gold watch and chain," admitted Tack apologetically. . . . And Numbers Four and Five jumped back into the water-filled trail hole to shift the gun again. The chief mechanic's light is shining now some hundred mils to the right.

All the trail holes are filling with water now. That in itself isn't such a serious difficulty. The cannoneers have become accustomed to wet feet and think nothing of wading about in slime knee-deep. But a wet trail hole means a soft bank. It is questionable whether or not any sort of a shift can be made after the first shot beds the trail shares in sticky clay.

There must be a leaky gas shell somewhere in our dump. The odor of decaying bananas is everywhere but it is still too faint to be dangerous.

Real disaster overtook me a moment ago. In an attempt to lift my right foot out of the clay of the Raulecourt lane I pulled the sole off my French boot. . . . A fine lot of luck that is. But there was worse in store. I stepped off the road into a communication trench and tore the seat and crotch out of my breeches. The jolly old parameter is now out in the wet night and thoroughly uncomfortable.

Midnight, September 11, to One A.M., September 12.—In the captain's dugout Don Stier is figuring data for a zone fire on Mont Sec.

All the theory we had hammered into us in the States and at Ornans is about to be eliminated. There is to be no adjustment of the guns, no correction for powder lot. We have been given a pile of shells and we're to shoot them. What could be simpler? "Feed her a shell and pull the string."

The map is stretched on a table of ammunition boxes. Light is furnished by a candle stuck in a

chocolate tin. The zinc ruler and the protractors are the only instruments in sight.

The gas officer lies stretched on his bunk reading a magazine. The instrument sergeant sits stooped in a corner intent upon his weather corrections. Battle is beginning to look like a very ordinary sort of thing.

The captain was called to Battalion Headquarters a short time ago. He has returned with an outline of our mission. Zero hour is at 5 o'clock but that doesn't mean that we are to sit quietly and wait for the doughboys to start across.

The preparation is to begin in an hour and we are to have a part in it: Number 5 gas on Mont Sec, three shots per gun per minute until daylight.

A bloodthirsty sort of mission, this. The active agent in Number 5 is prussic acid. Hydrocyanic gas is a weapon from which the so-called civilized world might have recoiled four years ago. Now the prospect of its employment against the tunnels of Mont Sec leaves us cold. We have grown weary of dodging the eyes on Mont Sec. To-morrow unless we are blown out of our holes those eyes will be closed. If the data on the tunnel entrances has been properly calculated there won't be a living thing on the butte or under it to-morrow.

At 12:30 the chiefs of section were called in, given their data sheets and kissed good-by. They filed out again to lay the guns on their sectors. It was still raining and still impenetrably dark.

The long silence was broken, however, by subdued commands: "Muzzle right. . . . Little more. . . . Steadee! Muzzle left. . . . Little bit. . . . Steadee. . . . Good!"

Flashes of electric torches and aiming lights began to appear like fireflies all over the creek bed where unseen batteries of the 123rd lay in waiting. The feeling of loneliness vanished at once. They are visible signs of the moral support which the night had hidden.

A belated French machine gun outfit hurried over the bridge . . . a string of running poilus and funny little one-horse caissons.

Over in the northwest a searchlight of dubious ownership was making a fruitless effort to pierce the heavy cloud rack.

. . . . . .

This dugout is not, properly speaking, a dugout at all. It is a sort of shallow cellar with a roof of curved elephant iron that extends well above the surface of the earth. It is possibly ten feet square with two-decked bunks on either side and a little open space in front of the door. It provides no protection at all against shell but it permits of work with a light, which is something.

A moment ago came an incident like an act out of an old-fashioned war play. Some one stumbled on the slippery steps and the door burst open to reveal a doughboy.

A straggler probably. It's my guess that he failed to see any light in the dugout and picked it as a likely spot for silent introspection until the battle should get itself well over. At any rate he didn't expect to find us there and his look of utter bewilderment came close to signaling his finish. Wheeler had a gun on him before he knew where he was. He dropped his rifle and put up his hands.

"I'm an American," he protested. "Sixteenth In-

fantry. Fell off a tank on my way up front and got beaned. Tryin' t' find my outfit." His accent was right and Wheeler put down the pistol.

"I guess you are an American," he said. "But you haven't any business here." So the captain called an orderly and directed that our doughboy prisoner be escorted through town and on to the Xivray road where he'd find plenty of his kind. Even a willing deserter may have trouble crawling backward out of an infantry trench. Wonder what's going to happen to the poor egg.

One A.M., September 12.—Squarely on the stroke of one came the crack of doom.

A naval gun over behind Raulecourt let loose a blast that rocked the sector. A heavy shell rumbled overhead and finished with a crack somewhere behind Hill 390. That was the last definite sound in the battle.

The entire line burst into action simultaneously—a continuous, quivering hedge of flame. Sometimes it flared to incandescence, sometimes it died away to a red glow—but it was always there, stretching in a serpentine line for miles on either side. Skeletons of villages stood out in it red and ghastly. Wire and wall and battered trees were silhouetted against it. Guns, virtually hub to hub for thirty kilos, were all firing at once.

The noise resolved itself into surf and tides of sound. It was impossible to pick out where it began or what become of it. One heard dimly the crack of one's own guns. For the rest there was an oppressive beating upon breast and ears, resolving itself now and then into a million coördinated echoes somewhat reminiscent of an express train plunging through a tunnel.

As a spectacle it was tremendous—magnificent. Never since Verdun had there been such a concentrated spray of iron on any single part of the Front.

A sweep of flame behind us—the town appears in soft reflected light like the peaceful village it was four years ago. A comet of fire before us—the gaping roofs, the broken walls, the spear points of smashed masonry loom up in their actual hideousness—a bleached and partly dissected corpse.

. . . . . .

The gun crews are calm and working steadily. Shooting the Soixante-quinze is no more of a job now than it was on the range at Valdahon. A glance at the sights shows that our shells are barely clearing the ruins of Bouçonville on the way out. Whether the Boche is replying or not one cannot tell. The sound of a counterbarrage would be as completely lost as the snapping of firecrackers in this infernal din.

A moment ago there was a crash in the road. Something struck close to where I was standing and I went back along the Raulecourt lane to see if I could detect any bursts back of the line of guns. If the thing really was a shell it was a dud and a lone dud at that. Probably it was a piece of some projectile northward bound—a stripped rotating band or a loose fuse.

It continues to rain.

The men screwing fuses into the shells are kneeling in puddles of water. It is penetratingly cold—thus again the battle bears resemblance to Verdun. But the mud, deep, slippery, tenacious, belongs to the scenery of the Somme.

"Clean those shells," bellows Tack, making himself heard much as a noonday whistle insinuates itself into the sounds of a boiler factory. . . .

"I don't want no red-head fuse to croppy me."

But his warning is gratuitous. If he fears the unstable red-head, he is not alone. Every shell fed into the breech is clean—clean and glistening with grease. The crews are taking no chances on a muzzle-burst.

Star shells are blazing over in the northwest—magnesium flares shot aloft from Very pistols and held aloft by unseen parachutes. Their brilliance can be distinguished from the glare of the barrage only by its steadiness.

"Shorty" Moffett of the second section, who spread the gas alarm in camp the other night, is acting as Number Two in the first section, loading the gun. He is a scientific workman and so skillful that he has time for thought—an unfortunate situation. Naturally his mind is on gas.

A moment ago when his gun was out of the firing for a ten-minute rest he came into this shed where the firing data is being protected from the rain and sought some important information.

"Lieutenant," he inquired, "don't you smell anything peculiar?" A fair question and withal noncomittal.

"Yes," I was forced to admit. "I smell quite a bit of the old peculiar. . . . And Shorty, I'll tell you what it is, it's powder smoke. Naturally enough, a cannoneer wouldn't be acquainted with it."

So "Shorty" was sufficiently shamed to forget about his incipient panic and he went back to his knitting chastened in spirit. This orchard probably would present a strange spectacle by daylight. The smoke must be hanging to it like a fog right now. But fortunately it is too dark for us to see any paint on the lily.

From the slope behind us one can see the effect of the fire on Mont Sec. Hill 390 is a mass of shifting flame, a fine illustration for the "Inferno." It is too terrible to realize. Nothing can live out there in front. Nothing can hide from that sweeping destruction.

. . . . . .

The first piece is smoking. Wet sandbags are steaming on the muzzle. Tack is howling for the mechanic.

The reason for the trouble is made clear after a brief inquiry. The first section has been firing twice as rapidly as scheduled. But nobody cares except possibly the Boche whose mask doesn't protect against Number 5 Gas.

In the P.C. Capt. Wheeler is censoring letters. It isn't that he wishes to deprecate the attractions of our battle, he admits. But if he doesn't fix up the letters so that he can dump them here he will have to carry the damned things forward. . . . And anyway there's nothing much to be seen outside.

Don Stier, the reconnaissance officer, and the instrument sergeant, their work done for the evening, are making a meal on fancy crackers brought over from Camp Merritt in a bed roll and long hoarded against such a momentous occasion as this. A bottle of champagne came out of the same kit, but nobody is much interested in artificial stimulant. Wheeler suggests that we send it over to the cooks, whose barn is being badly shaken by the heavies working behind it. . . . The phone rings. . . .

Somebody is shooting short!

A breathless moment . . . then relief. The short gun is firing H.E. and our ration is strictly Number 5 Gas.

The rain has stopped. Day is just breaking over the plateau on our right. The night's gas program is finished. The guns stand idle as drops of moisture fall on their blistered muzzles from trees and nets with a sizzling, steaming sound. New charts covering every minute of an hour's firing have been issued to the chiefs of section. Zero hour is fifteen minutes away.

The first flash of daylight shows the ruins of Bouçonville tumbling down—not because of any retaliatory fire by the enemy but as a result of vibration from our own cannonade.

The noise has died away—a lull in the storm.

Now and then can be detected the murmur of a Boche avion.

Five A.M., zero hour.—A burst of rockets.

The doughboys are out of their canals and into the mud.

The surf of sound rolls back once more from a coast of flame.

For one mighty moment the terrible volume of din came to climax. Then the roar struck its pitch and went on as it had through the night, dying, swelling, incoherent, incomprehensible.

Dawn was dull but rainless. A wreath of smoke overhung the hollows. There was no sun.

An aëroplane came out of the west, scarcely clearing the tree tops. From Broussey all along the road it followed the line of the batteries. But no one noticed it until a huge black cross on a white ground loomed in a cloud above our heads. We were not kept in ignorance of its intentions.

"Put-put-put," came a report like the hammering of a pneumatic riveter. "Put-put-put!"

Branches falling from a tree beside the first section

were the first indication that we had been fired upon from close range. The gunner and Number One gazed up in puzzlement at the aëroplane now streaking along toward the east.

The chief of section was setting his quadrant. He placed it on the gun, watched the bubble come to rest and held up his hand. . . .

"Read-ee! Fire!"

The incident was over. In competition with a barrage, machine gun bullets somehow don't sound so murderous.

Five-thirty A.M.—The first of the wounded—all Frenchmen—are straggling back across the stone bridge.

Well up in the van is the youth who with the nine other *soldats* occupied our dugout night before last.

He is not laughing now, though a smile of recognition crosses his face as he passes us. His left arm is hanging limp and blood is oozing through the bandages on his shoulder.

Most of the men come in pairs leaning upon one another. Some are in two-wheeled litters, covered with blankets and still.

There is temptation to withhold fire until they pass by. But it can't be done. The stream is too constant.

Six A.M.—A company of French engineers and a burial squad, cheerful and fresh looking, have just gone forward. While they were marching toward the front lines, the tide of wounded machine gunners was temporarily stemmed. But it was only temporarily. The blue-clad individuals, squads and platoons are limping toward Broussey again.

There is machine gun firing ahead—a snarly interrupted sort of fire.

Machine guns have a trait that one realizes at once as he listens with a chill to their stuttering. They never shoot by accident or at random. When they open up they are speaking to somebody. Some one's life is in the balance.

The guns bark on with their barrage. It is almost mechanical now. The routine checking of sights and quadrants is hardly necessary.

Eleven A.M.—Cease firing!

French patrols are working on Mont Sec, says the order. Which, unbelievable as it sounds, has a tremendous significance. The Boche has abandoned his stronghold. The hill where 40,000 men lost their lives in as many minutes is ours, virtually without a struggle.

The cooks are bringing over coffee and sandwiches, prepared in an old barn where tiles from the shattered roof fall intermittently into the soup.

The men are not waiting for food. They are lying down in the mud, dead for sleep.

It is raining again.

Limbers Front and Rear

Mark Time

BOUÇONVILLE, *September 12, Three P.M.*—At three o'clock the prisoners began to come in. The battle had reached its third phase . . . . First the withdrawal of the wounded . . . second the advance of the engineers . . . third the prisoners. . . .

The men arose from their beds in the mud and went forward to give the newcomers greeting. There was no doubting the genuineness of the interest they displayed in the procession of *feld grau.* For the first time they were face to face with the Boche and they were anxious to see how he fitted in with his press notices.

The cannoneers expected to see stalwart Prussians, fierce of mien and proud of bearing. It was not to be expected that our mysterious targets out there in the blue would prove to be anything like the Heinies we used to know in Milwaukee and St. Louis. Thanks to advertising the soldats had unconsciously endowed this warrior—"the Hun"—with a sort of diabolical personality. Hence curiosity mingled with distrust as four complete gun crews lined the road to watch the passing of the enemy.

They were disappointed. In the lead was a young lieutenant . . . A Prussian—his cap button branded him for that—but otherwise an everyday sort of lad. He was chubby and pink. As ferocious as a fat, contented baby. The haughty demeanor, the pride

of position, supposedly so essential to the German officer's well-being, were lacking here. The warrior didn't have time to be haughty. He was too busy displaying his pleasure at having been captured.

Doubtless he had expected to be bayoneted promptly—for Americans, according to the Boche propaganda issued for home consumption, were a wild lot with no regards for the rights or hide of a loyal German. After recovering from his disappointment at being allowed to remain alive, the lieutenant decided to act like a good loser. And he did.

Behind him were two boys about fourteen years old, thin, hollow-eyed and frightened. They had in their woe-begone faces that hungry-dog look that a man cannot steel himself against.

The men by the roadside looked on in surprised silence. Could this be a sample of the wonderful German army? Some of these children wore the emblem of the guards. Was it possible that this crack organization was so near dissolution that fourteen-year-old boys were admitted to its rolls?

They pondered these things as the bedraggled procession passed on.

One youth, fifteen years old perhaps, a fat, red-headed lad of the butcher-boy type, was staggering forward under the weight of his own machine gun. He was smiling at everybody who cast a glance his way. Behind him was a taller boy, maybe a year older, seeing nothing, hearing nothing. The tears were streaming down his wan cheeks and the stamp of disgrace was evident in every feature.

Two others, both under seventeen years, carried a stretcher. A third boy was under the gray blanket, unconscious. Lieut. Stier looked down at his impassive face as they passed by.

"Good God!" he exclaimed. "Have we been pumping cyanogen for ten hours on to these kids?"

"Probably not," I told him. "The lads who got the cyanogen won't be here. They're still up on Mont Sec."

But to all who looked at the captured ones there had come suddenly a changed point of view—a new appraisal of the enemy. As a foeman he must still be respected but rather as a spent fighter who summons all his strength for a losing battle than as the legendary paladin of yesterday. If these prisoners are typical of Germany's man power, then Germany is about finished.

The prisoners looked wonderingly at the concentration of artillery—all of their march since their entry into the allied lines had been for miles and miles between rows of active guns. They seemed to realize now something of the resources pitted against them.

"Verdun," murmured one hatchet-faced sergeant gazing over the field where as far as the eye could see rifles and howitzers lay scattered scarcely ten meters apart. And everyone—German and American—understood what he meant.

Our limbers are coming up. They stretch in long trains back toward Broussey. Lieut. Tomlin is with them. He is closer to a war now than he has ever been in a lifetime of seeking—though he probably will say that service in the echelon doesn't really count.

The balloons are moving forward. One cannot see the trucks to which they are tethered but the gas bags, bulking huge as one sees them close to the ground, are visible for miles. One is racing, at a

speed unseemly for so cumbersome a beast, along the Rambucourt road behind us.

Owing to the congestion up ahead, the limbers and caissons have been halted at our crossroads and, the excitement being over for the moment, the cannoneers have gone to sleep again. . . . Long columns of French equipment are coming up from the west: trucks, kitchens, machine guns and 75s. They join our limbers and caissons at the crossing and stop.

An American ambulance with an Italian label is stuck in a mudhole across the bridge. A French truck is pulling it out. The road is in a terrible mess. The mud is knee-deep in spots and there are occasional bottomless pits to mark where the heavies loitered when they were being pulled into position.

Swarms of aëroplanes are overhead—all of them American. The poilu drivers of the stalled wagons seem never to tire of looking at them.

Quiet is settling down over the sector. Only a few of the long range guns behind us are firing now.

Mont Sec looms up like a dead butte in the Bad Lands. Twelve hours ago it was vivid green. Now it is scarred and brown and smoking—like a volcano that has burned itself out.

A nimbus of smoke hangs to the north, marking the line of the advance. The infantry is going forward at a speed beyond the most sanguine hopes of the staff. And along the camouflaged road to the right a train of ambulances is moving at top speed toward Beaumont.

"Mike" Siefried, the captain's orderly, has brought in a meal of corned beef and biscuits. He has captured a trophy of war in the shape of a dozen doughnuts, and despite the grind of mud and corruption there seems to be some hope for this war.

The Salvation Army man is closing up his establishment. The Front has moved off and left him.

Forward, Yoh!

Xivray-Marvoisin, *September 12.*—Ordered to move again.

The guns which had been hauled out once only to be replaced for fear of a counterattack, were dragged into the road again and limbered. Camouflage nets, poles and stakes were loaded on to the pieces and piece limbers, personal equipment was piled on to the racks and the caissons were loaded.

The caissons were loaded! For a time it looked as if they never would be, but finally the tangle occasioned by the carting of four or five lots and kinds of shell was straightened and the officers breathed a sigh of relief.

Sergt. Smith wanted to take all his fuses but I.A.L.s. Sergt. Henley wanted to carry samples of all fuses except red-heads. Sergt. Ruckel believed in a full supply of fuses which weren't hard to carry, but he didn't think C.R.s would be of any account with the Germans retreating as fast as they were. Sergt. Rodger figured on carting all of his to be sure of variety.

All of which would have resulted in our reaching our next position with 700 rounds and 1400 fuses.

So the fuse question was settled by proper authority. Several hundred rounds of gas shell were carried back to the dump and the caissons filled with H.E. *Voilá!* Now all we had to do was find the enemy again.

At eight o'clock we started for Xivray. The limp and unprotesting cannoneers clambered on to the

carriages and the column pulled across the bridge and turned toward Rambucourt.

The camouflage at the dike across the end of Skeleton Lake was down as we passed. The village of Mont Sec and the hills beyond are aflame. The Boche is burning his ammunition dumps. The first act is over.

Rambucourt is the first of the long vista of wrecked villages visible from our mound at Bouçonville. We entered it just after the truck pulling the balloon. The place was crowded with American artillery and trains. The road was fairly well cleared.

From here the way turned north through a narrow lane, thence over a rickety trench-crossing into the old No Man's Land. Guns to the right and rear of us were still firing spasmodically. The blaze in the village of Mont Sec seemed to be spreading. Burning dumps, burning towns and flares made the horizon a continuous band of ruddy light.

The column halted under the churchyard wall in Xivray. Not a roof was left in the entire village. The enameled sign of a fire and accident insurance company clung by one end to the débris of a bank at the corner.

. . . . . .

Lieut. Nedrow brought a message that we were to turn to the right at the next crossing and proceed three kilometers to a new position. But we couldn't get on to the road.

Piles of rock, tanks, barricades, caissons and guns made movement in either direction out of the question.

The 123rd was headed one way, the 124th another. Some one had cut out of the column and moved forward until the jam of traffic was three carriages wide.

Then a train of French ration carts with their uncanny appetite for trouble had cut into the mess at the crossroads.

Some one succeeded in removing the ration carts, and an infantry outfit, single file, passed in to the right of the blockade and went forward. Presently they came to some obstruction and halted.

Captain Sercomb of F battery came galloping up at this juncture and appraised the situation with a practiced eye.

"Here's the cause of all the delay right here," he declared, pointing at the unfortunate infantry with his crop.

Now any artilleryman will usually concede that the infantry is the cause of pretty nearly everything in war. But in this instance, from the viewpoint of a ground observer, they seemed to be not guilty.

"Here's the jam right here," repeated the captain. "Who owns those caissons?"

No answer.

"Who owns those caissons?"

No answer.

"Lieutenant, will you answer me or won't you? Who is in charge of those caissons?"

That seemed to elect me. It was pretty dark but the captain was close and he seemed to be looking at me.

"What caissons are you talking about, Captain?" I inquired politely. The exasperated captain dismounted to deal with the matter himself.

He discovered with something of a shock that "those caissons" was a single cart attached to a single dilapidated horse that had not as yet turned into the column. He clambered back on to his horse and disappeared.

The cause of the delay was a caisson belonging to Battery C which had overturned in a narrow place in the road. It took perhaps half an hour to right it, and then, inch by inch, the column went on. More French machine gunners insinuated themselves into the line of march until the nationality of the procession was very much in doubt. There aren't any road rules for machine gunners.

We have by an unaccountable miracle reached the new battery position. Flash lights to the left of the road show that a P.R. (personal reconnaissance) is in progress. There is no guessing what sort of a place this is. A line of what appears to be woods is dimly visible to the north. A ditch, impassable for artillery, is between the road and the trees. There was nothing to do but halt and wait for orders.

One at a time the guns were brought forward and teetered across a plank bridge over the ditch. The caissons were lined up alongside the road.

The second piece didn't quite hit the bridge. It rolled off into the steep cut, and gun, equipment, horses became one inextricable mess. A month ago the accident would have caused a sensation, but under present circumstances it failed to evoke so much comment as a curse, except from the captain, who took time to inquire of the drivers what they thought of their chances for salvation.

Somehow the cannoneers straightened out the puzzle, picked the lead team off the necks of the wheel and swing, righted the cannon and lifted it out of the hole. The horses looked sad and apologetic about the wreck but they did not offer to give any assistance. I am beginning to dislike horses with all the intensity of a passionate nature.

Out on the road is chaos. B's limbers are turned one way; C's another. And there is no chance for one to work by, for the road is blocked to the north by the ditch and to the south by the traffic jam. Ambulances, French machine gun carts, kitchens, fourgons, side cars, autos, caissons, camions, bridge wagons and tanks are halted all the way back to Rambucourt.

. . . . . .

"Bring up the fourth piece!" There is a note of triumph in Wheeler's voice. With the fourth piece properly parked there will be some chance for sleep. . . .

But there is no fourth piece. It is lost with one reel cart, two caissons, an extra limber and a forage wagon back in that mélange of wheels and hoofs on the Xivray road.

C is pulling a gun into position by hand.

"Heave, Yoh!" commands a self-appointed section boss and a unison of effort lifts the heavy cannon out of pintle-deep ruts and through puddles as viscous and tenacious as tar.

The French machine gunners watching the performance are immensely tickled. "Heave, Yoh!" is a new anthem to them. They laugh boisterously and march off singing "Hee-Yoh!" in hearty sympathy.

. . . . . .

September 13, 3:30 A.M.—The missing section has arrived and with it all our lost transport save the bridge wagon which is marooned in the yard of an ex-church in Xivray.

The guns are finally lined up along a hedge and laid approximately by compass. The caissons are unloaded and sent back to Bouçonville with the

limbers. The gun crews have crawled into the wet brush to sleep.

A curse in the dark.

It is only the captain. He has fallen into a 210 crater and is struggling to separate himself from a pile of metal—shells, artillery wheels, tools. . . .

"The last bird who had this position left here in a hurry," he observes, nursing a bruised knee. "I hope they've lost the data book on the gun that dug this hole."

So say we all of us.

Liaison

The Woods near Nonsard, *September 13, Midnight, and September 14, Morning.*—We woke in our position on the Xivray road to discover ourselves virtually out in the open. What had appeared to be a dense thicket at midnight last night turned out to be a few scrubby trees. Our only defilade was a hedge in front of which the ancient No Man's Land stretched away toward Mont Sec. Save for a possible bombing it didn't make much difference. The sounds of battle were almost inaudible in the north and we were all dressed up with no place to go.

There was a ruin to our right—the remains of one house—and a rock pile on which a signboard bearing the legend "Richecourt" indicated the site of a town. Engineers were working among the rocks fixing up a road over the crumbling trench systems forward.

Out ahead of us was a scene that might have been a landscape on the moon . . . gray mud—miles of it—with dark lines on it where the deserted trenches put out their tentacles. It seemed that tanks were everywhere—little tanks with playing card emblems

on their turrets. For the most part they had broken through old crossings or caved in the roofs of ancient dugouts and now they were standing on their noses in shallow canals.

The usual traffic of war was cluttering up the road as it had been when we turned in.

"Just got orders to send somebody up to find where the infantry is," said Wheeler. "It's my own opinion that we are ditched, but of course we'll have to find out." So I borrowed a horse from the telephone detail and started on the merry tour.

In retrospect I find that it was an interesting trip. Across No Man's Land it was difficult to find the old road, much of which was marked with German sign-posts. But the going was better than I had expected. Engineers had thrown temporary bridges across the trench lines and while they might have been perilous for artillery they easily supported the weight of a horse.

Out about two miles in front of Xivray I came face to face with the first indication that war was not purely a mechanical proposition. A rifle, stuck muzzle down in the mud, attracted my attention and as I turned my field glasses I saw a doughboy curled up as if asleep beneath it.

On the *Melita* coming over, Lieut. Dufour of the French signal corps had said: "The impression you will always carry with you from the war is the memory of the first dead man you see." And it turns out he was right. I shall always see that white startled face and the black line of the blood trickle from above the staring right eye.

Beyond the old trenches the road got better and led up a slope over the eastern spur of Mont Sec. The invincible hill was smoldering—dead.

The Germans had made themselves comfortable in the village during their four years of occupancy. Massive concrete works stretched up toward the summit of 390. Tunnel entrances gaped in the side of the hill. Along the road were three neat little bungalows painted in gay colors and furnished with all the equipment of comfortable homes, including lace curtains on the windows. They were identified by artistic signs over their doors: "Villa Minna," "Villa Mannheim," "Schloss Heidelberg." And beyond them was a concrete bandstand proving that Heinie had not neglected his advertised *Kultur* even in this out of the way place.

Dead horses, dead dogs, dead field mice strewed the wayside. Dead men lay corded in the tunnel entries. Our gas had done a horrible job. The entire butte was as silent and lifeless as a vault in a cemetery.

I rode down the north slope with considerable emotion. To see the back of Mont Sec had been the ambition of every Yank in the sector—and here it was. Heavy guns on concrete emplacements or shattered by shell fire or mines lay everywhere. An American naval shell had skimmed the hill down into supposed dead space and had burrowed under a concrete ammunition shelter, uprooting it from the earth and tossing it like a cracker box to one side. It was virtually intact despite the force of the blast and it lay now like a little house blown over by a cyclone.

To the left a fairly good road led toward Woinville. The map showed a shorter path through the woods to the north and I followed it between rows of barracks and shelters. The lane was not in bad condition, although it was cluttered with Boche equipment dropped no doubt in the retreat—tin hats of the coal-

scuttle type, hairy haversacks, potato masher grenades, gas masks and Erfurt rifles. The American traffic jam had not yet reached this point and I had the road to myself. I noticed one thing about it, the surface was not like that of the highways to the south. It had been kept up by German engineers and apparently had been macadamized with slag from the mills about Metz. The roads we have traveled so far are grayish white, these are grayish black.

I learned after about five miles of traveling that it does not pay to trust an old map of a neighborhood that has been under revision for several years. The road came to a halt in a marsh and I stopped to reconnoiter. There seemed to be nothing for it but to get back on the highway that leads through Apremont, Woinville and Loupmont under the bluffs toward Hatton-Chattel. The map showed a secondary route leading westward and I turned that way through the woods. Another two miles brought me up for a second time. Here a field of barbed wire entanglements stretched out ahead of me. The highway through Apremont was plainly in sight about a mile ahead but it might as well have been in England.

I wasted twenty minutes riding up and down the wire, looking for a hole. There wasn't any. It seemed that I must go back the way I had come and the prospect of that was appalling. It was getting along toward eleven o'clock and Nonsard, where I hoped to find trace of the infantry was still far to the north.

The wire, I discovered, was less than two feet above the ground at its highest point and the crisscrosses were about four feet apart. There seemed to be three bands of the entanglement—each about ten

feet across. It would have been no trick at all to get over afoot, but it was manifestly no place for a horse. However, the thought came to me, there is virtually no limit to the things a young horse ought to know. I decided to take him across the wire as far as I could and shoot him if he got stuck.

The horse was a perfect stranger to me and that is what makes his subsequent confidence so touching. He seemed to take it for granted that I knew what I was doing when I picked up his near front foot and lifted it over the first line of wire. Next I lifted his off front leg. Then I maneuvered both front legs forward until they almost touched the crisscross. That brought the hind legs up to the first line and I treated them similarly. The nag looked on with mild interest at this proceeding but even when he pricked himself against the barbs he showed no sign of panic.

In thirty minutes I had lifted him over the three strands of wire and he had only one scratch as a memento of what he probably thought was a silly experience. I got over to the Apremont highway and turned north. Where the fork led off toward Nonsard there was sign of infantry activity and apparently with good reason.

As I cantered gayly forward a bullet zipped into a tree to my right and several of its mates snapped like cracking whips as they sped overhead. I dropped off the horse and led him into the woods. From somewhere out on the left came the typewriter solo of a Maxim gun. Slugs were zipping through the tree tops and leaves and branches were scattering down. I moved northward cautiously and presently came to a clearing across which were moving some ten doughboys—as disreputable-looking a mob as this or any other war will produce. A watery-eyed

person of doleful mien seemed to be in command, although he looked like any other poorly kept private. He didn't bother to salute, which I put down to poor discipline, until I discovered his name in small letters on his gas mask—Captain something-or-other of the —th Infantry.

"Shooting at you back there?" he inquired.

"Yes," I told him. "Machine gun."

"Good," he observed with obvious relish. I couldn't but think how happy it might have made him had I been knocked off.

"I wasn't so tickled with it myself," I said.

"Well, never mind," he consoled. "We'll get him for you. Can't have these Krauts shooting at our customers." And still sorrowfully—as if it hurt him to the depths of his soul to have to do this thing—he signaled to his men and they went forward in extended rank toward where the Maxim was still snapping.

. . . . . .

Nonsard looked like a German, rather than French, village. Big black signs were on all the houses and wreckage of German material was in all the streets. The place was alive with doughboys and officers of three divisions. However, there was no trace of the 18th Infantry and I was interested in nothing else.

At a P.C. labeled "Hofbrau" I came upon a brigadier general who seemed willing to talk although he had little to say.

"Oh, the First Division," he observed as if he considered it odd that anybody might have mentioned the matter. "I really couldn't say where they are. They went through here last night. But the 42nd Division was coming in from the east, and the 26th was cutting across to close the salient from the west

and it looks like the First is out of a job. Yessir, it looks like you ought to find them sitting down somewhere along the Vigneulles road."

So I thanked him and started out for Vigneulles. The highway took a northwesterly route through thick woods that arched overhead. It was full of life and teeming with signs of military activity but it was enough to revise all one's ideas of war. There were scores of doughboys scattered along the way but most of them seemed to be winning the war by doing things that might have been done in their own back yards at home. Some were hauling water, some carrying on conversations in groups, some swapping souvenirs and others just sitting under the trees and whittling. Only the sound of the typewriters ahead preserved the dignity of the battle.

I had gone possibly five miles before I discovered a First Division doughboy. He had a faint idea that the 18th Infantry was somewhere ahead. In another two miles I received some verification of this and so—along about 2 o'clock in the afternoon—I came to a group of wooden shacks where the colonel of the 18th and his sprightly aids were quartered. I stated my mission to a lieutenant who had been discussing with another lieutenant the exact difference between American canned Willy and Argentine monkey meat.

"Oh, you're with the artillery," said the lieutenant. "Well, the colonel is asleep now. I don't think I ought to wake him up. He's had a hard night."

This, of course, is the war that Hackett thinks ought to be taken seriously.

"Well," I said, "I should hate to disturb the colonel, but after all, you know, such as it is, this is a war. The artillery wants to know the coördinates of his front line."

"I don't know," he demurred. "He probably will be sore."

"So you think the artillery ought to stay put back there, without knowing whether or not it is still within range, until the colonel wakes up?"

"Well, I haven't received any orders about it. If you went down the road a little bit you'd find the regimental adjutant and maybe he could tell you what you want to know."

"My orders are to see the colonel and I don't think I could carry my horse another kilo anyway."

The lieutenant who had been listening to the lecture on monkey meat yawned as if to signify that he resented this interruption.

"Well," I said, "I have my orders. Show me where the colonel is and I'll wake him up myself."

"Wake him up," roared a voice from an open door at the rear of the shack. "What the hell made you think anybody could sleep with all this yammering going on? What's it all about?"

This apparently was the colonel and it was obvious that the lieutenant had been right. He was peevish.

"Come in here," he ordered. And I went in to his bedside.

However, it turned out that he wasn't as ignorant of the social amenities of warfare as the lieutenant had indicated. He seemed to realize that while the artillery may not be loved it is still to be tolerated and he was quite decent. He marked out his position on my map and initialed the marks.

"That's where we were two hours ago," he said. "I think we're still there. The push is over. The 26th Division is in Hatton-Chattel and the 42nd Division has come across the salient from the other

side. It looks like a job of sitting down and waiting for orders."

I mentioned something Wheeler had told me about a large force of Germans bottled up in the woods to the left of Nonsard and reported that the guns were laid to put a zone fire into this sector if he wanted it.

"I have no report on it," he said. "You had better stop at the brigade P.C. on your way back and find out what they want you to do."

So I started back to Nonsard. The machine guns were still at it no great distance away but that seemed to be the concern of somebody else. A German prisoner was sitting disconsolately on a duckboard outside the shack. One of the lieutenants gave him a cigarette, discovered that it was the last in the package and took it away from him again. Heinie appeared to be saddened but resigned.

On the road into Nonsard I almost collided with Marshall Field and an infantry colonel. Field had been attached to the doughboy outfit on liaison and he seemed inclined to think that the battle was doing very well.

"It wasn't so bad," admitted the colonel. "Of course we had your damned smoke shells to contend with." (He was speaking to Field.) "Right out ahead of us were a thousand Gerrys just begging to be taken prisoner. And we couldn't get at them on account of the barrage. Lost a couple of men trying. It was a good barrage but ill-advised."

In such conversation we passed a pleasant five minutes while the horse leaned against a barn to rest himself. Then I kissed them good-by and moved on into town.

The place was still in a state of flux manifested by nothing so much as that our own brigade headquar-

ters had hung out its sign over the door of the rathskeller where not long ago I had seen the infantry general. I went in and reported what I had learned. I also mentioned the matter of the 3,000 Germans in the woods and the suggested zone fire.

"For God's sake lay off of that woods," gasped Major Roth, the adjutant. "It may have been full of Heinies when you started out but it's full of doughboys now. They're clearing it out and if you shoot in there you'll kill somebody. Get back and tell Major Rearden to sit quiet. There'll be a motorcycle orderly along presently with new orders. . . ."

Once more I hoisted myself aboard the horse. At 4 o'clock I was going out of Nonsard on the road to Apremont. There seemed to be need for speed but there was no getting any out of the horse. Long before I got to Woinville I was forced to dismount and lead him. Even then he showed no interest in our important mission. I dragged rather than led him and slowed down what might have been a fast walk to the snail pace that suited him. It was dark when I passed up the sloping road to Mont Sec—nearly 9 o'clock when I pushed him up over the summit.

And there luck broke for me the first time that day. I found myself entangled with an outfit of 75s headed northward and caught the laugh of Sergt. Fuzzy Fleming. Battery A! Thank the Lord.

I turned over the half-dead horse to the stable crew, got another mount and rode forward.

The outfit was headed into the woods on a road paralleling the one I had taken in the morning and, if I remembered the map correctly, squarely on the way into the Nonsard swamp.

I found Wheeler, who seemed tickled to find out

that I had not stepped off the front line, and I reported all my discoveries without causing any sensation.

"Battalion got a telephone line hooked in an hour or two ago," he said. "Then we found out that we were five or six miles too far back to be in range. We're going up to Nonsard. They'll decide to-morrow what they're going to do with us."

The marsh road was interesting but not amusing. The reek of decaying wood suggested phosgene and the soldats were nervous. The soft spots were almost bottomless and guns sank in them up to the tubes. Whenever a piece had to be lifted out by hand there was a delay. It was nearly 2 o'clock this morning when we got into this field and unhitched. The guns were pointed in a general northwesterly direction and Don and I turned in for sleep under a roll of wet camouflage net. The fog came off the marsh and spread over us and the air was chill with a hint of frost.

The map showed that I had traveled nearly seventy kilometers since daybreak. I had had nothing to eat since breakfast. As I left the picket line an argument was in progress over the advisability of shooting my horse.

To Pastures New

On the Way Out

NONSARD, *September 14.*—Still sounds of fireworks going on about us but for the most part this place resembles the Foret de la Reine. The guns have not been laid and won't be. They are parked now over near the picket line and the men are turning the woods upside down in search of souvenirs.

Only one bit of excitement occurred during the night. Just at daybreak a battery, which had been lost somewhere in the swamp, pulled into camp. At the head of the column was the captain, bleary eyed with lack of sleep and on the verge of nervous prostration as a result of his experience in the mud. The C.O. had barely alighted from his horse when there was a vicious crack overhead. All of us crawled hastily from our bedding such as it was and looked up to see a white parachute of smoke opening in the dim sky. . . . Shrapnel . . . The first we had seen of it. Three more bursts followed—all of them hundreds of feet up. And presently the lead balls began to hail through the trees.

The bursts were too high up to do any damage. It looked as if some Heinie battery commander had lifted his corrector to about sixty mils so that he could see his sheaf above the trees. But the captain took this horseplay as something personal.

"We've been observed," he shrieked. "Get those horses loose! Cut the harness. . . . Cut 'em loose."

Fortunately for his harness, the E battery drivers were too tired to care whether they were being fired upon or not. Anyway, they couldn't find any knives. So they unhitched and led out in a leisurely fashion while the captain stormed at them like Napoleon at Waterloo. By the time they had removed the stable the firing had ceased.

It was learned later in the day that one Austrian lieutenant, overlooked in the clean-up of the woods, had been conducting the festivities all by himself, laying, loading and firing a battery of 77s with no great concern for results. He shot his arrows into the air . . . They fell, of course, he knew not where. An infantry patrol heard and captured him.

The First Division got into action again last night after its vacation but the whole thing was an accident. A company of infantry on the move across the woods to the left of Nonsard heard a locomotive coming toward them on the narrow gauge that runs north and south through this sector. They halted it to warn of a wreck ahead and found that they had captured a company of German engineers.

These lads had been sent forward to repair the defenses of Mont Sec after a battle that they had just heard about. It appears that orders were issued on September 11 to the scanty garrison of the hill to hang on at all costs. What more natural, then, than to suppose that they had held on?

We go out of here to-night . . . Lord knows whither. . . .

Processional

Gironville, *September 15.*—Camped in a woods here after 26 kilometer march out of Nonsard.

It wasn't an interesting march. Traffic has been straightened out in the sector and we were not forced to halt at crossroads. We turned west from Nonsard to Heudicourt—which was afire at one end.

Nobody seemed to be paying any attention to the fire except a lot of doughboys who were standing around it to keep warm. The town didn't suffer much in the shelling and seems to have kept most of its civilian population. Shutters were closed all along the empty street but here and there one could see a streak of light beneath them. In one house a scrapy phonograph was playing "Rose in the Bud.". . . There was a world of loneliness in it.

We moved southward through Woinville and Apremont and got in here shortly after midnight. We are squarely on the south edge of the woods within sight of the bluffs on which Fort Gironville is situated. There is no sign of the fort as we look up at the hills. Its disappearing guns are folded back behind the ruins of a château. But we know they are still there.

It was this fort which helped to fix the status of the weird battle line up under Mont Sec. The French had failed to drive the Boche back of the northern ridge of hills. The Boche knew that he could not penetrate the southern ridge. And so everybody sat down to wait for something to turn up.

Church bells were ringing shortly after daybreak but the effect of this pastoral loveliness was somewhat lessened by Wheeler, who cursed me with much gusto because a couple of wagons, stymied by the trees, were still out in the open. After this purely military procedure he invited me to breakfast and

divided the last of his chocolate with me. . . . A very good egg, this Wheeler.

We move again to-night.

On the Meuse

Foret des Kœurs, *September 16.*—Took the road at 6:45 last night and started for St. Julien. . . . A clear night with a moon.

It was dark before we had gone very far. We could make out little of the landscape except the blue hills on our left and stretches of valley and more hills on our right. As we crossed the railroad track near St. Julien we began to hear ominous sounds overhead—the unmistakable rising and falling note of a Boche plane. The garrison at Fort Gironville apparently had heard it, too, for searchlights began to play across the sky.

The column began to get nervous and most of us rode with faces turned upward.

Right after crossing the railroad track we got it. The hum became a roar. A shadow passed between us and the moon—a shadow that swept backward and forward along the line of march while a machine gun did its stenography and bullets spatted in the mud.

A bomb burst near the head of the column—another struck almost abreast of our battery and a third shook the landscape where the last of the outfit was coming across the tracks.

Our casualties—though no one will tell me why—where nil. The bombs had missed the road. The machine gun had been better aimed but ineffective.

Simultaneously with the dumping of the third bomb one of the searchlights caught the night bird and revealed it as a silver cross. Star shells and

shrapnel began to crash about it and it turned tail for the north. We proceed over the hump into the valley of the Meuse without further incident.

We crossed the river at Pont-sûr-Meuse. A horse in the lead of the piece team of the second section got tangled up in a *cheval de frise* and started a riot. The fog was so thick above the river that it was impossible for the drivers of one section to see the carriage ahead and the milling of the horses threatened to blockade the bridge.

Despite maneuvering the second piece was shoved off the road and hung precariously in the entanglements on a bank about twenty feet above the canal that parallels the left bank of the river. Man power saved it—lifted it back to the pavement and shoved it out where the panic-stricken nags could be hitched to it again.

We proceeded through the village of Pont-sûr-Meuse and northward via Larouville, Sampigny, Kœur le Petit and Kœur le Grand to the Foret des Kœurs, where we turned in. That's where we are now. We take the road again at dark.

Going Somewhere

NICAY, *September 17.*—We are spread out on a meadow some thirty feet lower than the village of Nicay. This has been a pleasant place for a camp. No hint of war about it.

A meter-gauge railroad runs through the town. We amused ourselves during the day watching the trains go by. We don't know where it runs to. Our maps are issued for one sector at a time. There is some report that its northern terminus is Verdun.

Plenty of doughnuts were issued to-day—not so

good as doughnuts go, for they were fried in bacon grease. But on the other hand they were better than no doughnuts. I have a saddlebag filled with them as an emergency ration.

Lieut. Peters came over to visit us to-day with a dumb-looking brass ring that he had just bought from an Algerian.

"A ring," he explained as he held it out for our inspection. "I just bought it from a lowly Arab for five francs.

"He came to me and showed it with some hesitance. But who am I to put on the swank in front of a lowly Arab? I took the ring and was impressed with it. I have never seen a ring quite like it.

"So I asked him how much and he held up his five fingers. That might have meant five centimes—which would have been a good price, or five francs or five dollars or five pounds. I compromised on five francs and now it is my very own."

Pete is having a nice time in this war.

The Algerians—compatriots of Pete's lowly Arab—are working in a quarry down the road. They are dressed in all the finery put into storage by the French army after the war of 1870. Some of them are admirals, some major-generals, all of them are plastered with gold braid so heavily that they can hardly stagger around under the weight of their uniforms.

March Order

SERACOURT, *September 18.*—Got here after a short march. Our destination now seems to be somewhere in the north, possibly in the neighborhood of Verdun. Phil Newman came over to pay a call to-day and brought a rumor gouged out of regimental head-

quarters that there is to be a big smash in the Argonne forest. I can remember having heard something about the Argonne, but not much.

It was pretty dark when we turned off the road to pitch camp. For some undetermined reason we were not piled up in a woods after the usual fashion but were assigned to an open field where a picket line was stretched between carriages. We were rolled up in our blankets in less than an hour.

Rain was threatening when we went into camp so we had no chance to look at our surroundings. It was somewhat surprising to find this morning that we were on the edge of a village. Two babies—four or five years old—turned me out of my pup tent. I awoke to find them rolling over me, jabbering a French patois which I judged to be only a little better than my own. I played with the kids most of the morning. They were the first I had seen since leaving the Foret de la Reine.

We had an accident here. Some gent driving a fourgon for B battery shot his head off with a rifle. He had the gun strapped to the side of his wagon and tried to pull it out of the straps by the barrel as he sat on the seat.

The major at once collected all the ball ammunition in the first battalion. A whang of an idea. Nothing like disarming soldiers to keep them from shooting themselves on the way to the Front.

The Jumping Off Place

Woods East of Waly, *September 19.*—This, so we are told, is our hopping-off place.

The Front must be somewhere in the vicinity because we can hear the rumbling of the heavies but it is so far just another Foret de la Reine. The

weather is cold with intermittent rainstorms. The scent of damp humus is all over the place—the old suggestion of phosgene.

There is a peaceful valley to the south of us. The Aire River, which is about as big as the trickle from a wet umbrella, moves about through a lush meadow between banks of water cress. We can't see much of it, though. We'll be on our way again soon.

I have strapped up my boot sole but there seems to be no hope for my breeches. The back end of them has been flagging in the breeze and over wet saddles since we left Bouçonville. There isn't a needle or a safety pin in the outfit.

Still in Waly Woods, *September 20.*—It is quiet and lovely except for the bull voice of the gunner of the second section.

"I got a wooo-mann . . . who's long an' lean. . . ."

The tune is reminiscent of a dog listening to a violin. If he lets loose with it again I'll murder him.

"Old Pop-in-a-Barrel"

Same Place, *September 21.*—Some of our high officers have been forward picking out positions on our new front. To-night we step out.

Heights above Parois, Northeast of Neuvilly, *September 22.*—The official map designation of this place is the Bertraine Farm. It is by far the best position we have occupied since we became a part of the war. Deep dugouts, water-tight map rooms, prepared emplacements with permanent camouflage, elephant iron ammunition shelters. . . . A taste of the "position warfare" of which we have heard so much and seen so little.

We came north through Autrecourt, Rarecourt and Clermont en Argonne, turning east on the road through Parois and then up the steep hill to our present suburban home. It was not an eventful march save for the tremendous activity along the road that indicated another great concentration and the probability of another drive.

At Clermont we realized that we were back on the Front again. All across the north the Very lights were arc-ing . . . particularly the four-star comet—white and cold—of which we saw so much in the St. Mihiel salient. It is apparently the German "all's well" signal. Probably Gerry didn't know that we were on our way up.

Our gun positions here are out on the open but so well covered with chicken wire camouflage that we had a hard time finding them. The pits are well constructed with wooden firing platforms and the muzzles of the guns when laid on normal barrage barely clear the surface of the earth. The pits are reached by a communication trench leading out from a north and south ditch that brings one to observation posts in the front lines.

It was daylight when we got the show put away. I put in a pleasant morning helping George Morton fry some bacon and hardtack and then parked myself in one of the elephant iron shelters until afternoon.

Now twilight is settling down and we find ourselves in as peaceful a war scene as one could imagine. As usual the hills to the front roll into the blue. Over to the left and behind us the high ground drops to a checkered valley beyond which are wooded bluffs. At a cleft in the bluffs Clermont pokes a white outline into the scene. The whole village seems to be

merged into a single pile of masonry as bold and swaggering as a medieval stronghold. . . .

There was a legend in the St. Mihiel that all the German flares were hung out by a one-legged sample of *Kannonenfutter* named "Joe the Lamplighter." It was his job, so the experts in folklore declared, to romp back and forth across the sector hanging out the rockets.

We have discovered that he received a new assignment after leaving Mont Sec. He is out ahead of us now, tossing up star shells one at a time. In addition to that—probably as a reward for his close attention to his job—he has been given a gun. It turns loose every now and then with a sound that makes one think of the opening of a champagne bottle in a cistern.

Considering the matter technically I should hazard that the gun is probably a nine-inch mortar on railroad trucks and that Heinie is moving it back and forth across the front of his sector to keep counter-batteries from locating it. The dull popgun sound is probably due to the conformation of the valley in which it travels. But all things considered the story of Joe the Lamplighter is a more logical explanation. He has been rechristened "Old-Pop-in-a-Barrel," but that has not lessened his affectionate hold on the myth-makers.

Shortly after six o'clock a terrific explosion shook the hill. Tack, who was standing beside me when the crash came, flopped into the communication trench and lay still. The process was not without merit but a little late. It seems almost useless to dive into the mud after a shell has hit. While I considered this I heard the echo-in-a-tunnel clatter of a heavy, diminishing in sound as I listened. A wisp of thin white

smoke curled out of the grass to the left. Very puzzling.

The sounds indicated an outward-bound projectile but I had seen no flame and there seemed to be no battery position in the vicinity other than ours. I left Tack still face down in the mud and walked over across the field. The solution was simple. The field quit suddenly in a clump of shrubbery and slid down toward a dry wash along the north edge of which was grouped the most amazing lot of artillery in this end of France.

Possibly a regiment of howitzers was emplaced between the start of the draw and the Parois road dimly visible beyond. These guns must have been in position for several years, for the limestone of the hills had been quarried out to provide long sleeping and shelter galleries. All of them seemed to be well lighted, possibly by electricity. I turned back, picked Tack out of the mud and went to Wheeler's shack to consult his map.

"Yeah," he said when I told him of my discoveries. "I've heard about these emplacements. They've been here since 1914 and the lines have moved away from them so far that they can only shoot on days when the wind is in the right direction."

. . . . . .

The good old spy scare is rampant once more. Everybody has been instructed to watch his step when he walks abroad at night. According to our information a major and his orderly were killed while walking along the east and west road on the crest just north of us the night before we came in. Foully murdered they were by the friends of "Old-Pop-in-a-Barrel."

Just why a spy should take the trouble to knock off a major when any second lieutenant in the A.E.F. would be willing to save him the work has not yet been made evident. Any spy who comes in here will probably break his neck tripping over telephone lines and gold bricks, looking for quiet places in which to sleep.

The Quiet Side of War

Same Place, *September 23.*—No majors have been killed during the night. Somebody stole a lot of prunes out of the ration wagon but that probably was not a spy.

The troops we are supporting have gone in at Avocourt just north of us. They belong to the 91st Division, which did such gallant service with the gas alarms at Bouçonville and points east, during our first few days in that sector.

We are laid on a normal barrage but shan't be required to fire unless we get a red and green rocket.

Very quiet here. Wheeler, the skeptic, has an idea that we may be sewed in here for the winter, and Tomlin, who declines to accept evidence that there is any war going on at all, agrees with him. Well, we could find a worse place for winter quarters.

Shell-fire and Ooze

Still Here, *September 24.*—Well, somebody has discovered that our range in this lovely bower is so limited that we can only shoot ourselves in the foot. So we are going to move out. We'll probably nest again in some swamp where the ammunition dumps will be marked by buoys. *C'est la guerre!*

The Woods behind Avocourt.—We moved. I am writing this in the so-called reel cart, a fourgon with a tarp thrown across the back end. Don is at his interminable figuring and it seems a shame to waste the candlelight.

There is a bit of a drizzle going on—why should one mention the obvious? The gun crews have lined up the battery between the road and the woods in a long clearing. They are already at work digging trail holes. We have been informed by brigade that we may have a bit of work to do to-morrow.

The withdrawal from our Neuvilly emplacements broke the hearts of most of us. It was no mere legal separation but a permanent divorce.

We were careful to get the guns out of the pits without damaging the earthworks and we tried to guide the horses so that they would break down as few weeds as possible. We were in column and ready to move before anyone entertained serious thoughts of ruining the place for the next tenant.

The colonel came along to inspect us and noticed that we had no camouflage nets. (They had been lost somewhere in the Bois de la Belle Oziere near Nonsard.)

"Better take the nets off these positions," he suggested. "You won't have any natural camouflage where you are going."

I objected respectfully that to remove the nets would be to end the usefulness of the positions, inasmuch as the first aëroplane over in the morning would be able to photograph the gun pits.

"Forget it," he advised. "In two days the Front is going to be thirty miles from here and these positions won't be good for anything but flower beds."

So we stripped the netting, tied it to the guns and moved down the draw to the Avocourt road.

Midnight.—Wherever we have been for the past few days, we are back in the war now.

An hour ago Heinie got the wind up. He seemed to be under the impression that a big push was under way. At any rate he set all his artillery to work on the front line. The result was comparable in sound to our own fair performance at Mont Sec. And the casualties were plentiful, as the stream of ambulances now passing along the road to the right will certify.

That in itself would have been of no immediate concern to us had he not taken into account that a drive is generally backed by artillery. At 11 o'clock he started to drop G.I. cans into our woods and along the ridge in front of us with a lavish disregard for ammunition waste that is quite unlike him.

We had been thinking ourselves veterans, but when one considers the matter we had not been under heavy fire before, and the experience was something we could have got along very well without. Don had just put out his candle and I was stretched out in the wagon with my boots by my side. At the first crack both of us leaped. Where Don lit I can't say but I know where I lit. It was in a telephone trench with two feet of water in it. I crawled out and sank to my ankles in the ooze. Whereupon I got back into the wagon. From here on, I may state, for the enlightenment of future historians of the World War, I intend to keep my feet and face out of the slime and when I die I'll die dry.

It is quiet now. Possibly the lack of return fire restored Heinie's nerve. Possibly he was shooting only because some egg in Berlin told him to do an

hour's shooting at 11 o'clock on the night of September 24. At any rate he seems to have decided to call it a day.

Fuzzy Fleming has salvaged a canvas cot somewhere. He is sleeping on it under this wagon.

Voice in the night: "Fuzzy . . . oh, Fuzzy . . ."

"What the hell do you want?"

"I just wanted to tell you to lie flat when you sleep. If you raise your head you'll bend that axle."

Argonne

Argonne

Placing the Set-pieces

Positions behind Avocourt, *September 25.*—We dug in to-day. In a few hours we had completed passable emplacements with shelter trenches behind them and a square grave for our little telephone exchange.

We have learned something from our experience at Bouçonville. No attempt was made to sink any part of the guns except the trails. Shells were piled on top of ground on duckboards hauled out of an old trench system in the woods. The laying was completed by noon and we are ready for the fireworks which, according to latest reports, will take place to-night.

Just off-hand I shouldn't give a dime for our position. We are in an open space with a wooded country hemming us in on three sides. The clearing is so narrow that batteries could not be placed side by side across it. As things stand four of us are in here now, one behind the other, and will soon be shooting over each other's heads.

One muzzle-burst and break the news to mother.

It is cloudy and cold but not raining.

Thanks to freedom from aëroplane observation our sewer digging was completed about 4 o'clock. That left the battery free for the evening and there was an immediate and remarkable clean-up movement.

Gas paste was issued during the afternoon. It is

an alkaline substance about the consistency of tooth paste. As soon as their other duties permitted, the soldats peeled off their clothes down to the hide and shaved off such hair as had been overlooked in the depilatory process at Foret de la Reine. Every man in the firing battery is now denuded of hair on top of his poll, under his arm pits and between his legs. His underwear is soldered to him with "Sag" paste and he is wondering if, after all, mustard gas might not be an improvement.

Somebody found a couple of cans of tinned bill. Otherwise supper might have been lacking to-night. The kitchen has had to move somewhere and probably won't be found in time to do us any good.

The Big Push

Behind Avocourt, *September 26.*—Was called to battalion headquarters to get firing data and a farewell kiss at 2 A.M. G.H.Q. is showing decided improvement in its guessing. The jump-off was scheduled for this morning and that's when it is going to take place. Some one has blundered. About tomorrow noon some brass hat in Chaumont will say to some other brass hat:

"What's this I hear about a drive starting at Avocourt this morning?"

And the other brass hat will say:

"Sure enough. . . . Didn't you order it?"

Whereupon the first brass hat will shake his head sadly and confess:

"Yes, I ordered it but I intended to think up some other nice date. . . . I must have forgotten it."

Battalion headquarters is somewhere over near Paris. To get to it you plunge blindly through the

woods and up the slipperiest incline in France. This hill to our right is pretty nearly mountainous in daytime. At night it's twice as high. It took the bruised and bleeding battery officers half an hour to assemble in the shack where the major and his staff sat on shell boxes and looked like Washington *et al.* at Valley Forge.

Two or three candles lighted the place but added nothing to its restfulness.

"I may point out," said Major Rearden, "that with the batteries placed as they are in echelon due caution must be exercised in setting off the ranges. Otherwise you will be shooting each other in the pants."

I shuddered at this unfortunate suggestion. All too keenly I was conscious of my own lack of protection, thanks to the wire that had ripped the seat out of my breeches at Bouçonville. Other executives might not be vulnerable. I was.

"What about muzzle-bursts?" inquired the executive of B battery.

The major smiled wanly and quoted Lieut. Tournier, our French instructor. (Wonder what the hell has become of him!)

"On the Front," he said, "there is no such thing as a muzzle-burst. . . . As the data sheets show we start to fire at 2:30 A.M. The barrage lifts and goes forward at zero hour as indicated. Zero hour is 5:30 A.M. That is all, gentlemen."

We jammed through the door and tripped each other on the way down the hill. There was no time to waste, if the firing was to start at 2:30. The path had been obliterated. Probably there were short ways back to our battery park—some of the officers seemed to know their way about. As for me

I could only follow the telephone line and I kept track of that by running it through my hand.

Aiming lights were beginning to wink over the field when I fell into the telephone trench at the bottom of the slope. Our own was lighted and the excited chiefs of section were clustered excitedly at the left end of the battery front, waiting for orders. There was less than a minute to spare when they got their sheets.

"From basic deflection Left 20. . . . On Number One open Five . . . With H.E. Normal, CR fuse, Load! Three thousand . . . Readee." Four breeches clanged open and shut.

Four fists went into the air. The minute hand was just touching the half hour.

"Number One . . . Fire!"

A dozen guns turned loose at once with a detonation that took one in the pit of the stomach. In thirty seconds hell was loose once more and tons of shell were screaming over the hill toward No Man's Land.

In five minutes the firing had settled down to a steady business like the operation of a boiler factory. The dangers of echelon fire were forgotten.

As usual it was raining.

Despite the argument that "On the Front there is no such thing as a muzzle-burst" one of D battery's guns blew up about 6 o'clock. Four men were hauled out of the trail hole—two of them badly injured.

At 5:30 the barrage lifted a step. The telephone jingled. One of the liaison men was reporting that the 91st Division had gone over the top as scheduled and was following the screen of H.E. with little resistance.

Dawn came up through a mist of fog and powder

smoke. The rain had stopped but the air was still as damp as a wet collie. Twenty-five meters at a time the range was lifted—to 5,000, 6,000, 7,000. The trails went deeper in the goo and the muzzles lifted higher. The wheels began to slip with every shot.

Joe Sullivan ran into a nasty accident in the first section. He was acting as No. 1 and failed to get his hand away after pulling the lanyard. The tube caught him on counterrecoil and mashed his fingers under the rollers. Had a devil of a job getting him out. The gun was elevated almost straight up on end and so hot that nobody could stand near it, let alone handle it. Finally we got a duckboard and laid it over the muzzle. Eight or ten men took hold of it and pushed the tube down out of battery. Joe calmly stood up and pulled out what was left of his hand.

Bandaged him up and sent him over to the road to wait for an ambulance. He may have a long wait because most of the ambulances are on their way up and they'll be full when they come down.

The gun resumed firing.

At 10 o'clock our elevation was pretty close to 45 degrees. The limbers were ordered. We dug ourselves out of the mud, harnessed and hitched. Then we pulled over to the road to wait five mortal hours for a chance to move.

Just before we got into the road another artillery outfit came up from the south. A rookie outfit with a full equipment of aiming and range-finding instruments such as we got rid of at Nonsard—not to mention a lordly bridge wagon and similar timber. These lads took over our positions and immediately hoisted camouflage nets and set about digging deeper

fox holes. Holy Ike! Is it possible that three short weeks ago we looked just as sappy as they do?

There seems to be no doubt that this is no mere repetition of the St. Mihiel parade. A lot of the boys got hurt when they crawled over the parapet at 5:30 this morning. As we moved slowly along in the worst traffic jam we have encountered since Xivray we came upon train after train of stalled ambulances. The drivers were improving their time by sorting out the corpses. The road was marked by little groups of dead men as regularly as mileposts.

. . . . . .

I have a splitting headache but I can't find the nerve to complain of it.

. . . . . .

Toward nightfall we arrived at Avocourt.

There was one building left standing in Avocourt but as I write an outfit of French cannoneers from an eight-inch mortar outfit are preparing to remedy this oversight. They are halting traffic on the road preparatory to setting off a mine under it.

The highway takes a hairpin turn through Avocourt—or rather two roads cross there at acute angles. The road between Vauquois and Esnes is virtually east and west. We came in over it, entering the sector of the 37th Division and were scheduled to move out again on a highway which parallels the Aire Valley toward the northwest.

It appears, however, that three divisions are using the northwest road as an axis of advance and inasmuch as part of the way is across a desolate No Man's Land of long standing, progress is virtually at a standstill. As a result of the deadlock we were turned into

a marshy field under the brow of the V-shaped hill that divides the two roads and encamped for the night.

Just before we pulled in here we discovered a good excuse for fighting this war.

An American balloon was up—somewhere over near Esnes. As we stood blocked in the road a Boche aëroplane came out of a cloud bank to attack. The air had cleared a bit since morning and the sun was in sight late in the day, but there were still enough remnants of storm to give Heinie cover in his approach and he was on top of the balloon and opening up with his machine gun before the crew below started to haul it in. Then it was too late. There was the usual burst of flame. The observer jumped.

About a thousand feet down the parachute opened and all of us stood by to watch a ghastly drama. The burning sausage was dropping about twice as fast as the parachute and squarely above it. The observer didn't have a Chinaman's chance.

There was something sickening about the whole thing. Thousands of soldiers along the American Front must have been standing as we stood, nauseated and helpless, while the flame came tumbling down.

But horrible as it was, the Boche aviator seemed to think that something was lacking in the tragedy. He swooped past the balloon and straightened out above the parachute and to one side. Once more he let go the machine gun.

A helpless foe hung there as his target and he emptied his clip. It made no difference to the observer of course. His doom was hardly twenty seconds above him when the Boche left. But the cold-blooded murder of it brought a roar from a

hundred thousand throats . . . a massed curse that would have silenced a barrage. Nobody who heard will ever forget it.

A moment later the burning bag struck the parachute. For just an instant it was arrested. Then a blackened meteor crashed down into the woods.

. . . . . .

The French have completed their work of blasting out the foundations of the last house. There remains of the town only a bent and battered crucifix with a sign on it: "This Was Avocourt."

Highway to Bedlam

The Very-Cheppy Crossroads, *September 27, Midnight.*—How we got here I don't know.

All the wheeled materiel of the A.E.F. is on the road out of Avocourt and all of it bound toward the Front. Ambulances are stalled in the ditches. They can't get back and men who might have had a chance for their lives are dying because nothing can be done with them.

There was hell to pay this morning. The infantry had advanced as far as the original artillery preparation warranted and had run into stiff resistance. Machine guns were cutting them to pieces and they sent back a call for help.

What to do? No much of anything. The road through Avocourt was paved with vehicles—a double column of them stretching for indefinite miles forward and back—locked hopelessly, end to end and hub to hub.

It was hopeless to attempt the hairpin curve through Avocourt. Our only chance lay to cross the Avocourt hill, taking a chance on the rotten bridges

that crossed the old trench system. The hill was hub deep in slime but not much worse than the Nonsard swamp. Twelve horses were hitched to a carriage. Every man who could find a handhold stood by to push. And so, after work that began at daylight, noon found us on the edge of the old No Man's Land waiting for a chance to break into the road.

Ahead of us stretched the edge of the Argonne—a region of blackened stumps and snarled barbed wire. It looked like the remains of a vast forest fire.

The rain began again. Thin slime coated the high-crowned road and trucks fought vainly to keep out of the ditches. Only by keeping astride of the watershed could they hope to stay on the pavement and such an arrangement was manifestly impossible. In the meantime the couriers came back from the Front with calls for help and more shocking tales of desperate need.

An M.P. colonel making a futile effort to straighten the tangle raged back and forth in front of us. He was swearing like an insane man and tears were rolling down his cheeks unheeded.

Some batteries had succeeded in getting on to the road before the jam started, the couriers said, but they were running out of ammunition and no relief was in sight.

About 2 o'clock Bob Stafford came riding along the ditch from the northwest. He had been forward on a reconnaissance job and apparently had a bellyful of it. He was nauseated and white as anyone could be through two days' growth of beard.

"It's just plain hell up there," he said. "I was talking to two birds outside of an infantry P.C. up near the Very-Cheppy crossroads and both of them were killed while I was looking at them. About three

divisions are all jimmed up on the Front and nobody knows where the hell he's going. And the active artillery, such as it is, is just about done. If there's a counterattack we'd better pick out a good road to Bordeaux and jump off the dock."

Other riders from the Front were bringing back the same news. Gerry wasn't giving away this sector as he had given away St. Mihiel. He was selling it. Eventually a great light dawned on the M.P. Unless some steps were taken to relieve the situation none of the doughboys up Front would be needing the rations in the trucks that were sloughing about in the mud. An order was passed down the line for all of these vehicles to pull off into the ditch and give the right of way to artillery and ammunition.

We were stripped bare of equipment. Only by long argument were we able to convince the crazed colonel that we had to have our instruments and phone equipment. At 3 o'clock we started on our rescue mission—four guns, six caissons and a reel cart. Personal baggage of all sorts was left in a pile on the hillside.

Save for the condition of the pavement there was little hindrance on the march through the woods. The Germans in retreating had mined all trench crossings. In places the holes were forty feet wide. But temporary bridges had been laid across the breaks and we got by. Once or twice the bridges were too narrow to permit safe maneuvering with horses. At such spots the teams were quickly unhitched and the carriages were dragged across by hand.

For the first few miles northwest of Avocourt the highway was a tenacious bog. But generally under the mud the wheels found the stone bottom of the

road and the going on the whole was better than it had been in crossing the hill.

We got to the Very-Cheppy crossroads about 5 P.M., fearful of the artillery sniping that Capt. Stafford had reported. But Heinie was giving his attention to some other neighborhood as we arrived and we turned east unmolested.

Almost at the crossroads we passed Col. Hackett standing at the edge of a clump of trees and giving us the once-over. He seemed to be worried but had lost none of his pep. According to present indications I may be closing this journal for good almost any minute now and I might as well go on record regarding our C.O. They don't make 'em any better. He doesn't like my attitude toward his war and I do. On that point we disagree but on no other. He's always up where the action is going on. He always knows what's doing. And he can't spare any time to look for deep dugouts. The men would lie down in the road to let him walk over them—and so, for that matter, would the officers. If I get knocked off right now, that's on paper.

I had to think hard to figure out some airy remark to make to him as we went by. It taxed the old ingenuity a bit, but if he thinks I'm a clown it would be a shame to disillusion him.

I saluted snappily and asked him if he thought it was going to rain. For a moment he looked as if he might have liked to call off the war long enough to court-martial me. Then he grinned and shook his head. After all the battery was getting along in good order and he wasn't much concerned with anything else.

About half a kilometer from the road to Very, we pulled into a clearing between heavy thickets.

We risked observation from a pair of German balloons and pushed the third and fourth pieces into a position in a fringe of brush to the north.

This is an old German artillery position. One or two 77s are still here—still foul with the fire that they directed on us last night. Apparently Heinie got away with four of his guns but quantities of equipment, including some panoramic sights and a French aiming circle were left behind. There is a B.C. shelter not far from the gun emplacements. It is only half underground but water-tight. Not far from it is a forty-foot dugout with a long gallery and two entrances.

Already we have had a taste of the panic that is seething up ahead. While Don was laying the two guns in the hedge a doughboy came over the hill in front of us. His raincoat was torn to shreds and his face was streaked with black smudge.

He was bellowing so that he could have been heard a mile:

"Raise the artillery fire. . . . You're killing your own infantry."

Inasmuch as we were the first battery to get into position and we had not yet fired the report seemed exaggerated. But almost simultaneously with the arrival of the volunteer informant the telephone began to bring back the same report. The second platoon was not yet laid. The first was still maneuvering gingerly on a six-foot path to avoid a gaping shell crater on the one hand and the grave of a German captain on the other. They went on to a place abreast the other platoon in the brush but they did not unhitch immediately. It looked as if we should have to move quite a bit farther north if we were to be of any service to the infantry.

Troops in the reserve had taken up the cry and it was echoing all along the Front: "Raise the artillery fire. . . . Raise the artillery fire. . . . You're killing your own infantry."

The battalion presently sent over orders for us to stay. Manifestly you can't kill your own infantry or anybody else's without guns and the wailing battle cry might well be put down as the raspberry.

It brought us close to demoralization, however. We were laid on a barrage and we prayed that we might not be ordered to fire it. We couldn't get it out of our heads that something was wrong.

. . . . . .

Capt. Wheeler received word a short time ago from Lieut. Phil Newman, now acting as artillery information officer, that the 91st's trouble arises from its having been too good for its job. As nearly as anyone can find out the Division has overrun its objective and lost touch with the 37th Division on its right and the 35th on its left. Its flanks are in the air and it has been subjected to an enfilading fire by German batteries.

Special liaison groups have gone forward. Scattered units of the 91st are being brought back and troops are being shot in on the flanks to restore contact. Capt. Moore and E battery have been sent to Epinonville—almost in the front line.

In the meantime we are in a bad way. If there is a counterattack, God help us.

Death Valley and Sheep Shank Hill

The Board Road, Very, *September 28.*—There was some firing during the night. In spite of our hopes we had to put down a twenty-minute barrage

shortly after midnight. There was some satisfaction in that it did not cause any louder howls than those that greeted us on our arrival at the crossroads.

About 2 o'clock this morning Don and I got a chance to go to bed. We found that Wheeler had come back from a reconnaissance trip. He was in the shed bending over the plank table studying a map by the light of some queer little German candles. Don and I rolled in on top of one another in the only bunk in the shack. It was a chicken wire affair with a sag in the middle, equipped with hairy gray blankets and probably full of cooties. When we woke we found the captain asleep across the table.

We had been told by French instructors that panicky infantry betrays its condition with rockets. Whether or not that is true the northern sky was a vast set piece of fireworks until we quit watching it at 2 o'clock. There was word this morning that the flying flanks of the 91st had been tied down but only after a considerable withdrawal from captured territory and heavy losses. Our liaison details reported a growing intensity of enemy machine gun and artillery fire and indications of concentration for a counterattack. At any rate the drive seems to be stopped.

Heinie Wertz came back during the morning, from a liaison mission.

In civil life Heinie is an artist. Just now he is a sort of hybrid infantryman.

A doughboy who came in with him seemed to be convinced that Mr. Wertz is the lad who gives the orders to Gen. Pershing. He was incensed at the levity of our greeting.

"Lieut. Wertz captured a machine gun nest," he exploded. "And he shot it out with the Kraut who was running it an' croppied him."

"Aw, razberry," commented Heinie. "I was just wandering along with this doughboy outfit and all their officers were knocked off so I inherited the mob. The machine gun was holding us up so I told all these babies to lie down while I sneaked up on it. I crawled around in back . . . elemental strategy."

"And you killed the machine gunner?" asked Don.

"Well, yes," admitted Heinie. "It was a fair fight. He took a shot at me."

"Don't apologize," Don advised. "If they ever finish this war you'll probably be famous as the only artilleryman who ever killed a German."

About noon we got orders to pull out and with slight delay we pulled.

German 150s had resumed their task of smashing up the Very-Cheppy crossroads. We took the crossing at a gallop with long intervals between carriages and got away clean. But there proved to be little choice between the crossroads and the Very highway.

All of this region seemed to be in the fifty per cent zone of a good adjustment. Smashed caissons, dead horses and dead men filled the ditches all the way forward. Up front the typewriters were working and there was a steady cannonade on both flanks. In the fields along the road the 150s were churning up the black earth steadily and relentlessly and it looked as if any minute would finish us. One shell on the road, we knew, would wipe out most of the battery. Soft mud will take up a lot of shell fragments but it has never been proved that a macadam road will take up any.

However, even in war the dice don't fall craps all the time. Just before we got to Very, we were halted by an M.P. because of a bombardment on the edge of town.

Alongside the road was a German lieutenant, dead as Bismarck, resting uncomfortably across a machine gun. And he had a nice new pair of boots.

There is a legend that one who wears a dead man's boots takes over all his troubles. But one cannot attach too much significance to such tales. There arise moments when he has to take a chance. Considering my own troubles, this Heinie's might be a blessed relief. Anyway dry boots—even a dead man's dry boots—are much more comfortable than the soleless pair I threw away.

We curved though Very at extended intervals. The place was a shambles. Dressing stations on both sides of the road in the open and under sheds. Men lying face up in the mud outside the stations with tickets on their breasts waiting for the ambulances that will arrive, God knows when. About half of them were dead.—Must have died a short time ago.

The road from Very to Epinonville as shown on the old artillery maps is on a ridge that runs northeast and southwest. The Germans had built a military road of planking along the valley under the south slope of the ridge. We turned down a slight gradient to meet it.

A liaison officer from the 122nd was in the town as we came up. He told us something about the board walk.

"The Krauts have a perfect range on that road," he said. "We picked up some prisoners who said that just before the retreat all the outfits in the valley were pulled out while the artillery north of here made an adjustment with unfused shell.

"Anyway, it's plastered with the finest collection of busted wagons and human guts in this end of France. Watch your step."

So we watched. We made about two kilometers at a trot and came undamaged through the continuous smash of 77s nosing over the hill and sweeping the south slope. About midway between Very and Epinonville we turned off the road, forded a little creek and went into position on this hill—the south rim of the valley.

We are on a reverse or counter slope, depending on whether one takes his definitions from the American or French school of fire—at any rate it is the slope facing the enemy. We couldn't take any other positions because the hill behind us rises another ten feet to a plateau where we should have no defilade at all.

The sky was cloudy. . . . No aëroplane observation.

We unlimbered along an east and west path that slopes slightly in the direction of fire, which means that we shall have to sink trail pits about twice as deep as would ordinarily be required.

In the grove at the foot of the hill the horses are still hitched to the limbers. Even our sanguine high command has an uneasy belief that we may be blown out of here before we get a gun laid. . . . The crews have started on their trail holes.

Six o'clock.—We are in for it now. . . . They just got Hackett. . . .

Where the word came from I don't know, but Capt. Wheeler came up the hill to where I was putting in the guns. He could hardly talk.

The report is that the colonel and Capt. Russell Lord and an orderly were standing alongside the board road at Very when one of the eternal zone fires started. They flopped, but Hackett wasn't quick

enough. His jaw is gone and part of his chest. Whoever told Wheeler said that he probably would bleed to death before they got him back to a hospital.

The men aren't talking. They don't seem to give a damn what happens to them and they might be digging graves instead of trail holes. . . .

Eight o'clock.—The rain that was threatening all afternoon has come. It is like a cloudburst. It would be on a night like this and in a position like this. We have no shelter but the clothes on our backs and a blanket or two salvaged from the German position we occupied last night. Our personal equipment is still back somewhere along the road to Avocourt.

I can't remember when I have been so miserable—not on account of the ungodly artillery fire from the north. Funny how quickly you get used to such things. A few weeks ago Don and I were jumping because a lone shell had burst in the next county. Now we can tell the direction by the screech and we don't bother to flop unless it's coming right at us. It seems as if we had always been under fire. . . . And what of it?

Even the fair chance that somebody will be trying to collect our insurance to-morrow doesn't seem so much to worry about. No reason why we should be suffering any less than the poor damned infantry that is scattered all over our front yard. Death, where is thy sting? You can say it without stuttering when you sit in a mud puddle. . . .

And it had to be Hackett. . . .

. . . . . .

We are up here to fill out the second battalion, which is minus a battery.

F is somewhere near Epinonville. Moore and E

battery have been moved up toward Eclis Fontaine in the infantry front line.

Two batteries are ranged along the hill to our left, and here, without camouflage or natural defilade, we shall dig in and say our prayers.

Midnight.—The digging of trail holes is the toughest work we have hit so far. The third and fourth sections are getting down pretty well. The first and second have encountered solid rock six inches from the surface and they are picking away almost hopelessly at a job that calls for a drill and dynamite.

The rain is a deluge.

Sergt. Ruckel's section, the lowest on the slope, has to bail out the trail hole for five minutes so that it can dig for two. Only two men can work at the digging at once. The spare cannoneers are huddled up along the hillside or draped over piles of shell, asleep.

Up behind the battery Sergt. Glenn Murphy, the gas Non-Com., is fairly well off. A natural skeptic, he declined to surrender his shelter half and blankets when we were ordered out of Avocourt. He carried them forward with much exertion—augmenting his burden in transit with another shelter half. Now he and two or three others are rolled up under the only shelter in the valley—notwithstanding which his voice is now raised in protest:

"This is a hell of a night," he avers. "These blankets are sucking up water like wicks."

Shells are still smashing down on the board walk. The very precision of the Boche fire is our protection. An error of a couple of hundred meters in range would land his overs right in our mess kits—if we had any mess kits.

Now and again I can sneak to the reel cart and get

my head in out of the wet. Don is occupying most of it now with his eternal maps and protractors.

I am dog tired and cold and hungry and I guess everybody else is. No sleep till morn when youth and pleasure meet.

The rockets are making a festive tapestry out of the northern sky. The front line is only about a thousand meters ahead of us and we don't miss any of the fireworks. . . . The poor damned infantry. What a mess it must be.

Poor Damned Infantry

Whiz-bangs

VERY, *September 29, Morning.*—"Oh-ho, say, can you see by the dawn's early light?"

A nice ripe place this.

The rain has stopped and the air is clear though sunless. We look down upon the board walk, stretching parallel to our Front, and upon a fine grassy vista marked principally by dead horses with their legs in the air. On the slope beyond the road is the remnant of a German battery. Without field glasses we can count ten corpses lying about it. There is another dead Heinie almost under the wheels of our rolling kitchen. Jack Foran and Con Turner were debating this morning whether it would be better to bury him or move the kitchen. They decided that there was no immediate necessity for doing either unless the weather should turn warmer.

The rest of the second battalion is pulling out for Epinonville and points along the Eclis Fontaine road. B and C have come up and are in position to our left. So we are once more part of the first battalion. Major Rearden has taken command of the regiment. Lord knows what good it will do him.

The trail holes are getting down through the rock pretty well. We probably have 3,000 meters range right now—which ought to be enough if the infantry hasn't taken a notion to move during the night. Battalion headquarters has been trying since midnight to get the coördinates of the front line. No-

body seems to know where it is except the Germans.

Details not at work on the gun pits have been assigned to dig shelter trenches a little over a foot wide, eight feet long and six feet deep behind the pieces. There is no surface rock up where they are working, but for all that they are taking a sweet time at the job. The artillery fire on the road is increasing. I should judge that about six batteries are registering on it now. And that isn't the worst of it. More and more of the retreating cannon will be stopped for action now that the infantry line is anchored. Our heavies—the 123rd—are temporarily out of it because of transportation troubles, which means that all the 77s on this sector will be dumping pig iron on us almost any minute now.

Ten o'clock.—Report says that a wagon is on the way with our equipment. . . . Thank heaven for that. We'll at least have blankets to-night.

The same orderly who brought word of our missing baggage delivered a memorandum to the effect that we had been given a citation for accuracy of fire in support of the First Division. And that's something. Without an official notice we might have suspected that we were pretty good but we never could have been certain that the stuff we dropped on Mont Sec wasn't actually going into a hole.

The noise is increasing. The doughboys are no longer howling for somebody to stop the artillery fire; their attention is being engaged by machine guns—hundreds of them. . . . Sounds like a riveters' convention or assembly hall in a typists' college.

Once this morning the slugs were zipping into the hedge on the crest of our hill. Crawled up there with Wheeler and discovered that the front lines of the

37th Division advance aren't a kilometer to the right of us. We are in the point of a salient. The 37th line is running approximately north and south and the present objective seems to be the second hill to the east.

The map shows that Montfaucon is ahead of them. Probably that's their sore point.

From the hill it was easy to watch the battle—and not so dangerous if one lay flat. . . . At any rate no more dangerous than the gun positions. Shells were bursting haphazardly along the ridge of the second hill, but they weren't holding up the advance.

The chief barrier was machine guns. As we watched, line after line of doughboys moved slowly up the hill in extended order, their rifles at the port.

They would come to the crest. The Maxims would stutter. They would tumble down like dominoes in a row. Litter bearers would come forward on a run.

Another scattering line of infantry. . . . Another five or six silhouettes on the crest. . . . Another comment from the machine guns. . . . Another rush of litter bearers . . .

And so on endlessly.

Two o'clock P. M.—We have been in action at last.

Lieut. Hobart Lawton, on liaison with the infantry, got tired of the shelling and after vain calls for counter battery work got a call through battalion to us. He gave us the map coördinates of a 77 position north of Gesnes, probably the same battery that has been shelling Very.

The experience was acceptable even aside from its effect on morale because it checked our laying. Lawton reported that the first four shots were correct in range and less than ten mils off in deflection. He

corrected the deflection and closed the sheaf, after which we cracked six volleys a minute into the battery for fifteen minutes.

We got two direct hits and the personnel is "distributed," according to Lieut. Lawton's report.

Half an hour afterwards Lawton called in with another job, which we gladly undertook. He had spotted two more batteries. He reports them out of action.

. . . . . .

Well that's something. Sniping is a much better game than barrage firing anyway. You are shooting at somebody who's shooting at you—which seems to be a fifty-fifty proposition—and you jolly well know whether you are ahead or behind in the scoring.

Three batteries out in one afternoon. . . . We have earned our keep for to-day.

Six P. M.—Was standing beside the kitchen down near the road when Heinie discovered our presence in the valley. He probably had been suspecting it ever since we did our bit of gallery practice.

The valley was rather quiet except for some H.E. smashing around Epinonville and the regular tattoo of the typewriters. Lieut. Templeton and a wandering circus from the 122nd came in near battalion headquarters at the foot of the hill to establish a telephone central. Temp and a lot of his trained seals were sitting about under a tree when there was an explosion.

I looked over just in time to see a plume of smoke rising at Templeton's feet. Two men were staggering around with their hands in front of them. Two lay on the ground. Temp's horse was butting itself against a tree.

My first thought was that somebody had been fiddling with a hand grenade. But as I ran over I saw a fresh crater that looked like the effect of shell.

"What happened?" I asked Temp.

"Damfino," he said. "I got it in both my legs. Will you please shoot my horse?"

So I shot the horse and then went back to see what could be done for Temp and his outfit. Two men were dead. The two who had been staggering around had fallen down. Temp was trying to get on his feet, but couldn't make it.

Somebody at the kitchen had sent over a first aid call to the medical corps station across the road and litter bearers were coming on the run. They had barely reached us when I got a light on what was happening. We were being plastered by the festive whiz-bang.

You couldn't hear the shells until they lit, but you knew well enough when they arrived. Afterwards you could hear them coming at you for a good thirty seconds. It was the most uncanny crab-walk of sound any of us had ever heard, all of it due to the fact that the whiz-bang—the Austrian 88—is faster than sound.

The second shot broke in front of the first piece and about fifty meters to the north. The third was about ten meters to the right, the fourth another ten meters over and the fifth possibly fifteen meters in a straight line. Counting the first shot out of it I gathered that we were being subjected to direct fire.

I beat it for the battery and sent the men streaking for their half finished fox holes.

Heinie seemed to be pretty sure of himself. He lifted his range fifty meters—clearing us by twenty-

five, fired four shots at that limit and then split the bracket.

For half an hour he kept it up while we hugged the dirt. Apparently he was satisfied with his work when he noticed that we weren't firing back, for he ceased firing as suddenly as he had started.

When we checked up Sergt. Smith was wounded—cut across the back of the hand by a fragment. His was the only casualty in the firing battery but a little down the slope to the right we found a body . . . little Mazalli, a kid from the echelon, whom I remembered chiefly because he had always been in mortal terror of horses.

Lieut. Wiley, executive of the battery to the left, came running across our front. He was cursing like a maniac and yelling, "I can't see. . . . I can't see. . . . Both my eyes are shut."

By the time we got to him he had tripped over some barbed wire and was flat. He had been creased across the forehead and the cut was cascading blood into his eyes. Another quarter inch and he would have been trepanned.

At the road where the litters were taken we came upon two other stretcher cases just brought down the north slope . . . a couple of German lads. One had taken a piece of H.E. in the lungs. The other had a machine gun bullet through his guts.

The boy with the belly wound was only about thirteen years old. He was jabbering to anyone who would talk to him

"This other boy is my brother," he said. "His name is Rudolph. We haven't been in this war very long. . . . Only about a month. . . . And the Red Cross man says we are going where there aren't any shells."

There was something pathetic about this baby and his eager interest in the strange country that lay back of the lines. Somebody translated for the benefit of a medical corps lieutenant who had examined our wounded. He shook his head.

"I guess there won't be any shells where that kid is going," he admitted. "He probably won't live till they get him to a dressing station."

The boy, who could not understand, seemed to think that the lieutenant was agreeing with him in the matter of safety from shells. He pulled out of his blouse pocket a thick, nickeled watch. Spare wheels and corners of brass fell out of it through a jagged hole. A bullet had gone clean through it.

"Do you think I can get my watch fixed in this country?" he asked me. I gulped.

"I think so," I said. "The French are very good at fixing watches."

"I hope so," he said. "My mother gave it to me just before I came into this war and I shouldn't want her to think I had been careless with it. . . ."

I tried damned hard not to bawl at that. I don't believe I succeeded. The kid was still smiling when they loaded him into the ambulance.

. . . . . .

Capt. Sercomb came by here shortly after 6 o'clock It seems strange that I should be writing it.

If I live I shall probably write a novel about Sercomb some day. I have never in my life seen a man go through such a complete metamorphosis.

He was older than the rest of us to begin with—serious minded and something of a martinet. I heard his own men threatening to knock him off when we were at Camp Merritt. When we first went into the line he was opinionated, crotchety, and quite gen-

erally disliked. I hadn't talked to him two minutes as he passed the battery to-night before I discovered that he had been miraculously humanized. He was calm, cheerful, confident . . . and I wonder if it will look like a back sight when I say that he seemed resigned.

Anyway, he stopped to exchange gossip and to shake hands as we parted. About ten minutes later he was dead.

The whiz-bangs were working on F battery when he arrived at Epinonville. He was ordering the men to cover when a shell broke behind him and drove his first aid packet through him.

The odd part of it is that when I ran into a battery detail that had carried him down the hill to the road every one of the men was crying his heart out. A Jewish rabbi said some prayers over him and they buried him on the hillside just out of Very.

Commuting to the War

The Board Walk, *September 30.*—All last night we caught it . . . H.E. and gas.

Heinie seems to be using a high explosive gas shell which does not reveal its identity by a characteristic "plop" when it detonates. In a zone like this where the strafing is more or less constant he can easily slip in a gas attack and keep it up for a long time without detection. The cold weather saved us last night but the little trickles of surface water that come down from the hill are coated with yellow. The countryside is plastered with mustard.

Turned out this morning to find that our picket line was just about gone. Must be fifty dead horses in the draw to our right.

It is a remarkable thing that casualties among the men were so few. Three men were reported wounded —none seriously. A man lying flat on the ground escapes the fragments of a burst unless the shell hits very close to him. A horse stands so high above the ground that the dispersion will make a sieve out of him if there is a burst in the same county.

Lord knows what we'll do now. We probably couldn't pull out of here if we wanted to.

It seems that the infantry got a respite last night. All the Boche artillery was working on us. As a result the terrain this morning presented a remarkable appearance. Wherever one looked there was either a dead horse or a sleeping doughboy.

Dozens of these lads came to our kitchen to mooch some hot coffee and a handful of Willy. None of them seemed to belong to any outfit nor anxious to do anything but sit and watch the artillery. I questioned one, trying to find out whether G.H.Q. had decided to send in reinforcements one man at a time or what the what.

"We ain't replacements," he said. "I don't know about the rest of this gang. They ain't in my outfit. But me, I come back to get some coffee an' a night's sleep. All our officers is gone an' we more or less shift for ourselves. I think I'll try a new sector next time I go in. I was up at Eclis Fontaine an' it's too damned hot."

There was something downright startling about this naïve confession. We had been hearing from our liaison details that the Ninety-first was just about out of officers and that the men were fighting as individuals rather than tactical units. Here was evidence that parts of the line must be totally shattered.

These men came mostly from the west coast of the United States and according to all reports were excellent shots. Victims of hard luck and spotty leadership, they were fighting a back-to-the-wall fight up there. But they were making no effort to retreat. They had discovered an excellent arrangement whereby they might commute to the war with their bellies full of hot coffee. Presently they would be starting for the Front again to take up their jobs where they had left them last night.

M.P.s over near Very were beginning to round them up. But they required no persuasion. It was one thing to fight a war on a piecework basis and quite another to quit a job and leave one's friends holding the sack.

The sun was out to-day. While it lasted the aëroplanes came over. Probably every squad in the battery now has a machine gun—either the Hotchkiss issue or German Maxims picked up along the route. All of this material was turned loose at once, as soon as the Boche planes showed up.

What goes up must come down and presently the danger from returning machine gun bullets was decidely greater than that brought over by the planes.

The Major came up to the battery in person to expostulate against this promiscuous shooting.

"If you fire on aëroplanes you will bring reprisals," he said with some logic.

"If we don't fire on them they'll spot us," I argued. "Probably they'll do that, anyway. And nobody can tell me that they're over here on any training trip."

However, the planes went back before any court-martial could develop from this difference of opinion.

The guns quit and we returned to our normal business of dodging shell.

The picket line—what is left of it—has been moved. The limbers have been taken back to some spot on the road between Cheppy and Very. Disquieting reports are coming back from the Front. A carrier pigeon dropped almost at battalion headquarters this afternoon. It was carrying a call for help. The Ninety-first Division is hanging on by its toenails but it has been cut to pieces. In the meantime we are here without any means for getting out and if Heinie doesn't counterattack he's an ass.

Same Place, *October 1.*—To-day we were given probably the craziest mission that we have had since we started.

Was called to the telephone to hear Lieut. Newman reporting to battalion that Col. Jewett in command of what is left of an infantry brigade was about to make an attack. He wanted a rolling barrage in ten minutes. And of course he wanted it in an area entirely outside of the sector on which we had been firing.

There was a wild protest from battalion—all of which Newman took without much comment.

It would take a couple of hours to figure the barrage. It would take time to divide the sector between the batteries. Nobody but an ass would think that 75s could be fired the same as rifles, etc., etc.

"I know all that," Newman answered. "I told Col. Jewett and he told me to tell you what I have told you. He attacks in ten minutes."

The coördinates of the total sector were given. Before battalion headquarters had got around to making assignments I had measured off a third of

the Front and ordered a trail shift to cover it. The guns had to be laid all over again and Don Stier was off somewhere to the right on a reconnaissance detail.

There was nothing for it, of course, but to do the job myself and it seemed to me a long time since I had taken a sight through an aiming circle.

Somebody remembered the declination for the district—which was fortunate. It was news to me. Correction for the difference between Lambert North and Magnetic North was simpler. Deflection measurement was merely a protractor reading. The guns were laid in three minutes.

Col. Jewett has been considerate enough to select a flat terrain for his attack and it was at about the same elevation as the gun positions. . . . No allowance for site difference. . . . The ruler gave me the map range. And there we were. God help the infantry. In seven minutes we were putting down a curtain fire, six rounds per minute about fifty meters in front of the infantry front lines. Newman reported range and deflection O.K.—which seemed hardly plausible. In three more minutes we were lifting the range and I was figuring the jumps from map and range table just about one minute ahead of schedule.

Well, thank God, that's over. Twenty-four guns were on the job in the first fifteen minutes of play and we went on and on for a couple of hours.

" 'What good came of it at last?' asked little Wilhelmine. . . ."

Newman reports that the infantry has been repulsed.

Shortly after firing of the trick barrage came word that the long expected counterattack was

forming at the head of a shallow valley between the the Ninety-first and the Thirty-fifth Divisions. We were given our sector with considerable haste and laid on it at once.

This seems to be a serious business. The mechanics were called up and instructed in the approved mode of wrecking the guns, should we be compelled to leave them. . . . Pull out the key, "feed her a shell and pull the string."

Most of the battery's side arms were lost in the trip up here. But that deficiency has been remedied by the machine gun squad and B.C. detail, which slipped away immediately to salvage rifles and pistols from the corpses with which this district is so plentifully supplied.

Looks like a good time to write a letter home. But there doesn't seem to be any news right now that would pass the base censor. According to reports the left of the Ninety-first Division line is almost totally unofficered. The doughboys have shifted toward the right, leaving the sector so thinly protected that there is virtually a hole in the Front where there should be contact with the Thirty-fifth.

If we get out of this it will be because the lads ahead of us have an almost incredible supply of guts and the Lord is on the side of the G.H.Q. that is withholding relief.

Every gun in the valley is firing now. The rate has been cut to one round per gun per minute but it looks as if we might continue to put them over at that speed until the ammunition gives out.

Heinie Wertz came in shortly after the barrage started. He looked pale and tired but was quite cheerful. He sat down on an ammunition box to watch the shooting.

"The doughboys will be pleased to hear the shells going over—if there are any left to listen," he said. "They've been having one sweet time."

"You come from that sector?"

"Yeah. I was up there from the very first. I don't know when I've slept—and that goes for every man up there. Nobody knew where the hell he was or why. It was every man for himself. . . . At one time I was running a couple of companies—or what had been a couple of companies. . . And what I don't know about infantry is plenty."

He paused to light a cigarette and through the firing he told long stories of the drive and the men with whom he had been serving.

"The best fighters that ever wore a tin hat," he said. "The officers weren't such wows to begin with and they were most all dead the second day out. There are sergeants up there leading battalions and I'm not kidding you. I felt many times like getting up and making a long run for the rear, but nobody else seemed to have any such idea. So they just stay there and snipe. It's an Indian war, that's what it is."

"Were you relieved?" He looked up with a pained expression.

"I thought I told you," he said. "I was wounded this morning. Got about a ton of sinkers in my legs and hips. Nothing in the guts as far as I know."

We dispensed with Heinie's lecture on war and sent him down to the dressing station. The diagnosis is that he has eight slugs in him.

Midnight.—Still firing. We'll need a lot more ammunition to-morrow.

Guidons Up!

Same Place, *October 2.*—Still firing. . . .

Some French 155s came in last night—probably to fill the hole left by the 123rd. They are down in the draw where our picket line used to be and are firing most of the time over toward Montfaucon.

They have a lot of trouble with rotating bands. Every now and then one strips and goes singing through the air with a protest like that of a dog whose tail has been stepped on.

Some time ago I got a letter from Marie saying that she had gone out to look for a job in a munitions plant where her 108 pounds of brawn and sinew undoubtedly would have been acceptable.

Last night when the first of the damaged rotating bands began to make its comical noises Wheeler listened attentively.

"Sounds as if Marie got her job in the munitions plant," he said.

Our barrage has been going on virtually without a let-up. Apparently the Boche has not yet been able to break through. It is also apparent that he is still concentrating for a try at it.

The battle now has taken on all the exciting atmosphere of routine in a steam laundry. Two men and a sergeant make up the gun crew at each piece. Shorty Moffett and some other hardy soldats are fusing shell at a dump on top of the ridge. To save time they toss it down to waiting warriors at the guns eight or ten feet below. A dropped shell probably would wipe out a couple of crews. But on the other hand some of the whiz-bangs that stray over every now and then may wipe out a couple of crews before this suicidal opportunity develops.

Johnny Albright came up this morning with a horse, and in spite of our protests got back to the echelon with a can of dehydrated potatoes that he

had found and concealed under the board road two days ago.

We naturally hated to let go that much food but the rules of warfare seem to be pretty definitely fixed: "Finders keepers."

Also he told a pitiful story of how the echelon was waiting for him. He had mooched a tin hatful of lard from an engineer kitchen and the grease would be hot and waiting when he got back.

Half an hour later we got a telephone call from the echelon. Johnny had arrived with his potatoes. He opened the cans and discovered that he had risked his valuable neck to salvage a hundred bandoliers of thirty-thirty ammunition.

Two o'clock.—The firing continues.

The men are tired and the old morale has been severely strained during the past forty-eight hours.

We got a bit of encouragement a few minutes ago, however.

I was up at the shell dump behind the guns when an artillery colonel came riding along the hill on horseback.

"I am Col. Ruggles of the 7th Field Artillery," he said. "I am looking for a place to put in three batteries. . . ."

The 7th F.A. . . . The First Division. . . . The men could have kissed him.

"The First Division coming in here?" I asked.

"On the way up now," he said. They'll relieve the 35th."

"It'll be a godsend to know that you're anywhere in the vicinity," I told him. And we must have seen that I was speaking for the whole battery.

Don Stier who knows this sector backward pointed

out the half-forgotten German position across the valley.

"Looks like a hot spot," observed the colonel. "But I guess it isn't any hotter than this. Good day and thank you, gentlemen." He rode away again as calmly as if he had been on a practice problem at Fort Sill.

No artilleryman who saw the 7th F.A. come into action this afternoon will ever forget the sight.

They came charging down the crest road north of the valley at a gallop, in beautiful drill formation, with their red guidons up. Shrapnel was bursting over them and shell to the right and left of them. Still they came on—a picture out of the recruiting posters—horses at top speed, pieces and caissons clearing the shell holes on two wheels, cannoneers hanging with difficulty to the limbers.

We had imagined war to be a good deal like this and lo, it was.

Just as the leading battery cut down off the slope toward the old German position a marine shell struck the road. Six horses and a piece were piled up. Cannoneers, thrown clear, rolled down the hill. The charioteers who followed cut into the bank to the left to avoid a collision as shell after shell crashed down on them.

Then the miracle. Out of the mass, which should by all the rules have been composed of dead and dying, the horses righted themselves. The drivers leaped to the saddles. The race was on again.

"Action left!" The leading battery pulled up to a halt. The clank of pintles could be heard across the valley. The limbers suddenly veered around

and went away as the gun crews swung the trails about and pointed the muzzles toward the northwest.

And all the thousands of men in the valley forgot their immediate work as they stood up and cheered.

Air Bombs

Same Place, *October 3, Morning.*—The guns are getting a chance to cool off and it's about time. Empty shell cases are stacked about nine feet high behind the battery—a fine brassy dump that Boche artillery observers will have no trouble spotting.

There seems to be no limit to our sector. We have done a piece of firing for the 37th Division and afterwards swung about to the opposite side of the map to take on a contract job for the 35th. We hear that the 35th is going out to-day or to-night and the First is replacing it.

There are rumors also that the 91st is to be hauled out. It's my view that it's never coming out. Another couple of days and there'll be none of it left. Right now I dare say its casualties are the heaviest in the A.E.F.

Whatever happens we are going to stay here. That's the joy of being Little Orphan Annie. We have been attached to about eight divisions during the past four months for "administration and rations." All of them have given us administration. We are stealing our rations.

One P.M.—The strafing of the board road goes on with the same old accuracy and effect.

A string of caissons belonging to D battery just ran into it. A whiz-bang got a square hit on the second carriage and blew it up. From here we can

see eleven men laid out in the ditch along the road. The caisson train has gone away at a gallop.

Five P.M.—There hasn't been much doing to-day. The old battle has become a Foret de la Reine affair. The battery, all save the men who are getting off a zone fire on some woods to the northwest, are sitting about reading newspapers or sleeping. The shells come over as usual but they no longer cause comment unless they get too close. . . . The only shell that counts in this war is the one that gets you.

Except for the noise of the typewriters and the cannon, the scene hereabouts might be a back road in any active training sector. Nobody is particularly hurried or excited. Everybody has his own little pet worries to concern him as if he were working in a garage or factory. . . . I wonder if anybody will ever paint a battle scene like this.

. . . . . .

There was some excitement a moment ago. Billy Rodger came along the board road with a string of caissons. He was riding at the head of the column with a mechanic. And by some second sight Gerry found out about it.

The first shell struck under the sergeant's horse and killed it. The team of the first caisson pulled up so suddenly that the wheel horses were almost run over. Billy turned around in his saddle and yelled his orders so that they probably were heard in Verdun:

"Trot! Yoh!

"Gallop! Yoh!

"Get the hell out of here! Yoh!"

Anyway, his outfit seemed to know what he was talking about.

Seven P.M..—About 5:30 o'clock our guns knocked off their job and battalion reported that we were to return to normal barrage. That promised a respite and I went across the road to the medical station under the north slope of the valley to see if something might be done for an abscessed tooth that I brought with me to France.

Doc. Coulter was just about out of equipment. He had lost his drills and forceps and medicine cabinet and his supply of false molars and such. But he did have a stick of gutta percha and a bottle of mule-dip. With a nail or something he pried out the old filling and treated the aching void with creosote. He was just plugging up the hole with gutta when we heard a racket overhead and looked up to see a fleet of aëroplanes.

There must have been fifty of them, all flying low, all intent on obliterating the board walk.

They began to kick out their eggs as soon as we saw them. The first bomb hit in a picket line a little way up the hill—a line belonging either to the 7th Field or a camp of engineers. I thought the burst was going to flatten the hills. Scraps of horse dropped on us for half a minute and we were knocked as far as the ditch, which was filled with slimy, stinking refuse. After that there was no keeping track of the bombs or of the machine gun casualties. The eggs rained down like projectiles out of a quick barrage and every time they struck they found a target.

Air warfare is perfectly horrible because there is no such thing as protection against it. One is as safe lying flat on the surface of the ground as he would be in a trench.

One bomb early in the attack struck an engineer kitchen just as a mess line was passing it. Scraps

of human débris were tossed about for fifty or a hundred yards.

Our machine gun squads forgot what they had been told about annoying the Boche aviators and they turned loose. Archies behind us opened up. Doughboys along the road began to snipe with rifles and the din stunned the ears so that the whole place seemed a vast silence.

There was plenty of action in the valley. . . . Men running about from nowhere to nowhere, falling into shell holes and crawling out again, circling on their own tracks, hiding behind the scrubby trees. One lieutenant came dashing across the field, found himself in the marsh south of the road and made no attempt to get out. He continued to struggle eastward through the bog.

All the vehicles on the road—and there were plenty of them as always just before dark—seemed to be operating on Lieut. Rodger's suggestion: "Get the hell out of here! Yoh!"

Stalled wagons were pushed over on to their sides in the ditch and within a minute or two trucks and ambulances and caissons were driving by at full speed. The aëroplanes circled about Very and came back toward the east.

As I was pulling myself out of the ditch a covered truck rolled by and slowed a bit for the turn.

The rear curtains parted and a young lad who probably had been asleep a moment before stuck his head out. He grinned when he saw me and he glanced appreciatively at the sky where rosaries of tracer bullets were making a pretty filigree.

"Hell of a lot of sound," he commented. "Is there a war going on around here, lieutenant?"

. . . . . .

We took fifty casualties out of the wreckage in our own neighborhood and laid them out in the ditch. It was impossible to salvage all of the victims. The second bomb had distributed them pretty thoroughly.

. . . . . .

Eight o'clock.—The rumor of this morning has been verified. The 91st Division has been relieved. Scraps of it have begun to come out. A sergeant just passed here with fifty men. He was the highest officer left in a battalion.

To our right a string of the 32nd Division is going forward in single file.

As we had suspected, we stay here.

Wheeler brings word from battalion that this 32nd Division is a crack outfit. It has seen plenty of action over west and has acquitted itself well enough to get some citations from G.H.Q. It will be comforting to have fresh troops ahead—especially troops with officers who can read maps. But I get no great kick out of the encomiums. There never will be a better division than the poor, haggard, battered mob that is now coming southward over the hill.

The 91st is made of lads out of the war novels—they didn't know when they were licked. They had never been taught how to retreat.

. . . . . .

Phil Newman just strolled in. He was on liaison since the start of the drive out of Avocourt and he confesses that he has had a bellyful—not particularly of war but of the acting brigadier general to whom he was attached as guide, philosopher and friend.

"The old rummy gave me orders to stay ten yards behind him at all times—" Phil said. "He'd order

one kind of fire and his staff would order another and then both sides would threaten to court-martial me.

"Three days ago he told me that under no circumstances was I to permit fire on the woods just ahead of us. Then he left me and went out prognosticating. Half an hour later Major Vorhees came dashing up and told me he wanted a zone fire on the woods at once. I told him what the colonel had said and he informed me that he was giving a direct order. I sent back word and you fired the barrage. . . . The colonel and a flock of infantry were in the woods. . . . Oh boy, talk about hell.

"Let me borrow your mess kit. I've been living on hard-tack for a week. . . ."

. . . . . .

Dysentery! The battery is rotten with it. I had suspected for a long time that the disease was becoming epidemic. Now there is no doubt of it. Doc Duffy says that all this end of the A. E. F. is in the same condition.

There's to be another drive to-morrow. We have been given our sector and Don is figuring the rolling barrage. I hope that we'll be able to hold together long enough to fire it.

Through the Woods

Welcome, Colonel

On the Board Walk near Very, *October 4.*—Nothing very spectacular about the start of the new push this morning. Every gun in the valley was firing but there was no thrill in that, inasmuch as every gun has been firing almost continuously since we came in here. The 32nd Division is ahead of us, the Third on the right and the First on the left.

We ceased firing about noon and prepared for march order. Then we discovered that the pardon has not yet come. The going is slower up through the Argonne than it was at St. Mihiel or Avocourt. The infantry has been held up and we are still able to fire four or five kilometers ahead of them. It's a fair guess that we sha'n't be taken out until we reach the limit of our range. Well, fair enough. The devil that you know is better than the devil you don't know and we seem to have been getting pretty good breaks of luck here, even if we are in a hell hole.

Our new colonel came in to-day. His name is Joseph A. Rogers; he's a regular army artilleryman and he was formerly in the 18th F.A. That's all of his pedigree so far as I know.

He is slight and dark and his clothes look as if he had been in this mess for some time. Save for the fact that the seat of my pants is still flagging in the breeze, my uniform is better than his. He is no arm-chair warrior, for which thank God.

Our battery is closest to battalion headquarters where he took over the command from Major Rearden, so he paid us a visit within ten minutes after his arrival.

He put me through a grilling that made a Fort Sill final examination look like the recital of a multiplication table. . . . Not that he showed by any outward sign that I was being dissected. . . . He was friendly and casual through it all and so was I. I have been in this thing too long now to give a damn about what is asked of me or what I answer or what anybody intends to do about it.

"Well," he said judicially as he turned away from the guns, "you'll do for me, Lieutenant."

Fair enough! And he'll do for me.

In Re Fertilizer

Same Place, *October 5.*—Heinie put a gas barrage on us last night—mustard and arsenic.

It was bad enough to have plain undecorated dysentery. Now I am vomiting most of the time. Must have got a whiff of arsene.

There probably is something funny about this. If I live I may see the day when I'll guffaw at it heartily but last night I was on the verge of killing Don Stier.

Don and I are sleeping in a pup tent at the foot of the little hill. About midnight he brought in a box with a candle in it, his map board and protractors and a plate of beans. He ate what he wanted of his supper and then went to work to figure his barrage.

He pushed the remnants of his beans out of the tent but not very far from the flap.

About midnight I was forced to crawl out. About six feet from the tent I found a shell hole and draped

my chin over the edge. I was too busy to pay attention to the muttered cursing of my comrade at arms. Ten minutes later the telephone rang. Don had been summoned to battalion headquarters. He started to snake his way past the flap and put his right hand squarely into his plate of beans.

He turned around and swore at me with a skill that seemed utterly beyond him, and I, unaware of the beans or what conclusions he had drawn, felt around vainly for something to throw at him. Which shows, as he admits this morning, that unjust suspicion is even a worse evil than committing a nuisance on or near my post.

At two o'clock the phone rang again. Don was still out, so I answered it. The major was calling.

"The manure spreaders will be around with three loads of manure," he informed me.

"What the hell?" I inquired in a military manner.

"Manure spreaders," he repeated.

"We certainly are in dire need of fertilizer," I admitted and I hung up. It wasn't until twenty minutes later that I solved the puzzle. The major has invented this trick code to fool the Boche. Any German spies who picked up his message would naturally think that the artillery had gone in for truck gardening. Some time before morning the ammunition train would be in with a couple of thousand rounds. And what of it?

Routine Battling

Still Here, *October 6.*—Lieut. Lawton has been given command of F Battery. He inherited it by right of rank after Sercomb was killed. Now it's his officially.

To-day was pretty quiet except for some firing in behalf of the First Division and one or two barrages toward the Front.

Heinie, apparently, is anchored in an ammunition dump. At any rate he certainly has no lack of shells and his one ambition is to shoot them all before anybody can catch up with him. No casualties to-day.

Late to-night the whiz-bangs worked on the battery. The first shell of the salvo skimmed our pup tent and dropped short of the hole where the B.C. detail has buried itself.

"Say, Hudson," bawled a voice from another tent, "better get out of there. . . . That shell didn't miss you by ten meters."

"Naw," replied Mr. Hudson sleepily. "They'll raise the range twenty-five and the next one will miss me by fifteen." And it did. There is great comfort in being a good artilleryman.

Target!

No Change, *October 7.*—The Epinonville hill is a slaughterhouse.

Lawton, the new battery commander of F, is dead. So far the litter bearers have brought back seventeen men, most of whom are dying.

Hobey stopped for orders at Major White's P.C. and then went on to breakfast in a stone barn. A shell hit on the roof and burst before it reached the floor. Every man in the place got a piece of it.

White helped to haul Lawton out from under the débris. He was still alive and conscious.

"I have the battery fund in my belt, major," he said. "Take good care of the men. . . . They need it."

And then he went out.

There's nothing much to say about it. Hobart Lawton was one of the squarest shooters in this regiment . . . the shells are marked for the square shooters. . . . Wonder who'll be the next to go.

Horse Identity

At the Old Stand, *October 8.*—Still sick. Heinie uses a damned good brand of gas.

Just heard that Bob Stafford had gone to a hospital with the flu.

Some ammunition came in last night. The train had to turn off the road near our kitchen and come up along the path beside our pup tent. Don and I could hear the creaking of a chariot de parc and we sat up a bit to listen to it.

Newman has been sleeping with us—when and if he can; he also straightened up.

"Wonder whose train it is?" he said.

"If it's stuff for the French heavies they'll run right over us in the dark. If it's an American train they'll bear off to the right."

We were wide-awake now—all set to roll out. From the distance we could hear the voices of the skinners speaking to their teams. . . .

"Ghee! Allez! Ghee!"

"French," said Newman.

"Ghee! Ghee! Allez! Allez! . . . Giddap, you son of a bitch."

We all lay down and went to sleep again.

Premature Peace

As Ever, *October 9.*—We were firing to-night when Don Stier got news that the Boche had capitulated. He had been wandering about the French battery

when word was received by several relays from Paris. He came rushing up to the guns.

"Peace!" he shouted. "The war is over."

"Number Four! Fire!" ordered the chief of the Fourth Section.

"Raspberry," said a voice in the dark.

"It's true," declared Stier. "The French just got the news from Paris."

A whiz-bang missed him by four inches, spatted into the muddy bank and camoufletted. The battery cheered this evidence of peace.

"Never could believe the Frogs, anyway," muttered Don and he went back to his pup tent.

Out of Range

Still on the Board Walk, *October 10.*—Still working like one-armed paper-hangers for one division or another. But the old quadrant tells us what G.H.Q. doesn't: Unless there is a retreat they'll have to pull us out of here. The infantry is just about out of range.

The 32nd Division is reported to have taken Romagne. There is a solid line across the north end of the Argonne and a movement has been started toward the Meuse.

Yessir, somebody is about to foreclose a mortgage on our old home and put us out.

Relieved

Somewhere Southeast of Avocourt, *October 11.*—We have been relieved.

Lacking horses, we couldn't go chasing after the infantry, so when we were removed from Very instead of being sent up through Epinonville and Eclis

Fontaine we were turned back again through Avocourt.

Not a shell falling. Not a typewriter snapping. I feel as if a jumping tooth had suddenly quit aching. Maybe I can get my pants fixed before we are sent back in. . . . Maybe they aren't going to send us back in. . . . Maybe . . . I wonder where we're going.

We are camped in a muddy woods along the road. The rain is falling gently in piles of dead leaves. This would be a nice place to stay forever. . . .

The Road Back

Woods above Dombasle, *October 12.*—We haven't moved but daylight has revealed our position.

We are only a mile or so from the white road to Verdun and we can stroll abroad at any time and see a weird collection of French artillery milling back and forth along the highway. We aren't as interested in it as we once were.

Nothing happened during the night except that somebody stole Major Rearden's boots while he was asleep in a fourgon. He may or may not have to spend the rest of the emergency in his sock feet.

Same Woods, *October 13.*—Phil Newman and I went out this afternon and oriented ourselves. We aren't so far from the Meuse and for that matter only a short distance from the spot where we opened the show in the Argonne. What are we waiting for, O my love?

Rest Camp

Rest Camp, Brocourt (Camp de Mud), *October 14.*—In a drizzling rain we pulled out of Dombasle

and along the white road to this misty forest. It is a setting out of a mystery story. The sort of place where the Old Marster's body was found a year ago come Michaelmas . . . tall whispering trees; winding, shadowy pathways and mud . . . a swamp of mud.

This is like all rest camps—a deserted village that nobody has given any attention since 1914. Some tin shacks are scattered around. They are equipped with chicken wire bunks and theoretical roofs. The horses are belly deep along the picket lines. We are praying that the guns will not sink out of sight in the park.

The officers are billeted in little domed sheds made of elephant iron. Not so uncomfortable. Wheeler and I are in one which is fitted with a stove fashioned out of a gasoline drum. The smoke won't go out through the pipe. It spreads out over our sleeping quarters.

Camp de Mud, *October 15.*—A lot of officers came over last night and played poker. It was an erratic game. The dysentery is still raising hell.

Camp de Mud, *October 16.*—Some talk that we'll be quartered here for the winter. . . . If the divers find us.

We have been assigned to the second army . . . for administration and rations. I wonder where we'll have to steal our rations now.

Also we have been given a drill schedule. All that warriors need after a month or two of bombardment is a nice snappy workout in squads east and west. May not be so bad. Nobody has saluted anybody in this regiment since we left the Foret de la Reine and perhaps we ought to show the new colonel that

we can go through the motions once considered so essential to discipline.

Camp de Mud, *October 17.*—A few of the best sergeants—Top Sergeant Hammond, Sergt. Major Ben Lawless, and Sergt. Malcolm Rodger have been sent to school at Saumur. We are running a little school of artillery theory here. Nobody takes it very seriously. Whoever wrote the book put too much hokum in it.

We did some nice snappy squad drill this morning and massaged the horses this afternoon, after which we imbedded them in the mud again.

Camp de Mud, *October 17.*—We were bombed last night.

It had all the thrill of a new experience, although we might have expected it. It is a rule of warfare that all rest camps are to be bombed regularly.

I was writing a letter in our shack and Wheeler was puzzling out some battery orders when we heard a motor running. I though it was somebody racing a motor cycle. But it wasn't. Gerry was overhead in force. He dropped eggs on the woods for an hour.

This morning the soldats are talking about it as if they had never heard of such a thing.

Most of to-day will be spent cleaning up the matériel. We are to be inspected to-morrow.

Inspection

Camp de Mud, *October 18.*—There are days of solace for the gay artillerist. To-day is one of them.

The inspection came off as scheduled, but not without some friction. We were lined up in the park waiting for the French ordnance officer who was to look us over, when along came a major.

He seemed to have something under his collar and he expressed himself without delay.

"Didn't you have sense enough to get the mud off those guns?" he demanded. "This is the rottenest looking battery in the brigade. You'll hear from me when this inspection is over."

In a way he was right. The guns didn't look any too sweet. And there was no use arguing that we had no means for carrying water to wash them. The whole battery heard the bawl-out and they looked a little grumpy when the French officer—a brigadier general—arrived to put us through the jumps. The major was with him. So was General Todd.

The old boy didn't look at the wheels. Instead he opened the trunnions and grunted. Then he cast an eye through the barrel and grunted again. He watched the checking of the sights with a third grunt and then asked for the gun books.

"Twenty thousand rounds!" he exclaimed.

"Since we've had the guns," I explained. "I don't know how many they fired before we got them."

And with that he turned around and saluted.

"I congratulate you," he said. "These are the best guns I have seen in this brigade. They are among the best guns in the American army." General Todd beamed.

"The wheels aren't very clean," I remarked—with no malice, of course.

"And do you shoot with the wheels?" he inquired. I was forced to admit that we did not. He smiled and went away.

No wonder the guns are in good condition. The lads in this battery come from a town where there are two factories making fine instruments and most of them have had mechanical training in the shops

during vacations from high school. They appreciate the 75 and know how to take care of it.

Woman! Heaven Bless Her!

Camp de Mud, *October 19.*—Hitched up and went out for a drive across the hills to-day. . . . The regiment passed in review before Maj. Gen. McNair. What for, I don't know. Col. Rogers expressed himself well satisfied.

It rained throughout the show and washed the guns. So all was not lost.

Camp de Mud, *October 20.*—Translated some communiqués to-day. The French are forecasting the breaking of the German line along the Meuse, although, apparently, there has been no great advance in the Argonne. The Germans are crowing that they have stopped the great American push.

Took a ride down to Aubrecourt looking for some cigarettes for the battery.

Saw a woman . . . the first in God knows when. She was an elderly doll peddling copies of "The Stars and Stripes" outside of a Red Cross dump. I stayed on my horse on account of my torn pants and asked her about the cigarettes. She showed me a copy of the Paris *Tribune* forecasting the end of the war.

"I'm so afraid it's true," she said. "I'm so afraid we'll stop now when we have them on the run. I do so hope that we'll push right on into Germany and destroy their towns as they destroyed France."

I couldn't quite get this viewpoint, which I am told is very popular among noncombatants.

"Ever been up front?" I inquired.

"No," she admitted. "No closer than this. But I feel that I'd like to carry a rifle and go up there."

"Lay off of it," I suggested. "It's a punk place. And get this through your noodle: the object of war isn't extermination—it's to get in a position where you can dictate the peace without too many heavy losses. The sooner they can end the war the quicker."

She looked at me as if I had said something traitorous, and I rode on. The voice of gentle woman, somehow, is less of a treat than I had imagined it would be.

Odd Activities in Billets

Camp de Mud, *October 21.*—Brought back a flock of cigarettes and a half pound of chocolate. Just about had to wreck the S.O.S. to get the chocolate. But anyway I got it home and mixed it with some of the brown clay that they sell at the French canteen on the Dombasle road.

Spent the evening making fudge and did a good job of it despite the smoking stove and the loud protests of the poker party.

The dysentery is still rampant, but the food is pretty good, and possibly decent diet will correct the disorders if we stay here long enough.

Camp de Mud, *October 22.*—Got a lot of new horses. Looks like the end of our squads east and west. It is officially rumored that we start back toward the Argonne to-morrow. Maybe the old dame was right and we are going into Germany.

Lieut. Tifft, a former member of the 149th F.A. and a graduate of Saumur, has been assigned to A battery. Sergt. Smith is now top cutter. Sergt. Morgan of the machine gun outfit has been given his place as chief of section.

Romagne

Beyond Montfaucon

Back to the Line

VERY-CHEPPY CROSSROADS, *October 23.*—And here we are again.

Came up past Parois and Avocourt. Nothing troubled us on the road except inspectors who insist that cannoneers have to walk on the march and carry their own packs.

We were pleasantly surprised when we turned in here. We remembered this spot as dry and sheltered.

But ah, the old place ain't what it used to be. Thousands of horses had broken up the turf and it was a bog similar to that of the Bois de Brocourt. Need for bridge timbers had resulted in the wrecking of the beautiful dugouts. We had a tough time finding a place where we wouldn't sink in over our necks when we pitched camp.

Left Camp de Mud at 1:30. Got here in ten hours.

We hear that the 11th F.A.—a heavy outfit—has been given us in place of the 123rd.

VERY-CHEPPY CROSSROADS, *October 24, Five P.M* —We move out in thirty minutes.

Our destination is Romagne.

Who said peace?

Romagne of the Red Gutters

ROMAGNE-SOUS-MONTFAUCON, *October 25.*—The hill over which the road led into Montfaucon was steep and the rock paving was pitted with shell holes.

We were glad that the horses were fresh as they staggered up the incline. Later in the night such a hill would undoubtedly prove a serious obstacle.

The hypnotism of the march had come over the men. There was no sound save the rumbling of iron vehicles—no conversations, no echo of human voice at all even in the repetition of commands. A shadowy figure at the crossroads halted the column. A ghostlike procession of amorphous carriages passed on the right with a dismal rattle. The shadow moved again. The artillery teams stepped into the harness and the column was once more on its way.

The memory of Montfaucon is a series of gray shadows, ruins rising against a pale sky much like the ruins of Avocourt, only more numerous here and representing a greater price in blood. . . . A long, mossy wall with broken beeches behind it . . . a crucifix at the crossroads, its base (smashed by a shell) still standing as it may have stood for generations, symbolical of the hope that lies ahead.

There was a crucifix at Avocourt, too. A crucifix and the road marker: "This was Avocourt." It is typical of France that with towns razed and beaten into the earth the shrines should have escaped. The spirit does not die. It cannot be crushed. One felt this as the cannons rumbled past the little wayside cross. One felt the force of the inscription only half legible in the dark: "Spes Unica," "The One Hope."

The column took the road to the left past a pathetically new cemetery where a hundred or more little white crosses served as guidons at the last formation of the soldiers who had died taking this hill. . . . Then on into another stretch of No Man's Land.

Strips of weathered camouflage fluttered in the slight breeze, scaring the horses and arousing a shut-

in feeling in the men who drove them; rags and raffia that once had been green—a disreputable ruffle on the outer garment of a desolated civilization.

Down into a valley where the camouflage was succeeeded by tall poplars and the road became clotted with stagnant traffic. There was a reel cart just ahead of the battery—a vagrant that somehow had become separated from the rest of its outfit and was now proceeding in haphazard fashion wherever road space permitted. It had its initial mishap in negotiating the narrow trail around a stalled truck. The battery was forced to wait—as was the rest of the long column, five miles or more of it, while the reel-cart attendants replaced a broken wheel. It was a nerve-racking delay.

At the bottom of the hill the road turned suddenly around the remnant of a standard gauge railroad track.

Here was romance enough. The rails were rusty. Patches of weeds grew high between the rotting ties. Frequent shell holes, visible even in the half light, told only too plainly that this path of iron was no stranger to artillery adjustment. Whence came this road? Whither did it go? The battle maps of the sector indicated it with so slight a line that at first sight one might not suspect its presence at all. Obviously its usefulness had ended long ago and modern charts of the neighborhood lent more emphasis to the stone highway over which traffic would always be passing. The streaks of rust cut northward between the hills, and southward to a twisted end in a shell hole—a sorry terminal for a railroad.

The reel cart mules shied at something in crossing the track and got over the traces. Another delay.

There was a mist in the valley, cold and pene-

trating, a gauzy, drifting, white fog that added to the ghostliness of the iron procession. Now and then a light penetrated it, but there was no judging the possible distance of the lamp from which it came. Once a spot of brilliance shone out seemingly above the sky line—like a light swung aloft in a church steeple. Two carriage lengths farther along the highway, one found that it came from a flickering candle in a shell box on top of an engineer company's kitchen parked by the wayside.

A mess line had formed and soldiers were stepping out of the gloom into a little ring of light to receive their allotment of goldfish and drop back into the dark again, to eat their scanty meal in silence.

Far up ahead in the crawling column was a tank or a tractor. In the narrow places in the valley the stuttering echoes came back spasmodically. A string of caissons and limbers, belonging to some battery already in position, tried to pass on the way to the rear as the last of the regiment came abreast of the kitchen. The attempt failed. There were a few grinding noises as hub caps clashed—a few heartfelt curses—and the echelon train pulled off into the ditch to wait for passage room.

Over to the right beyond the hills, there were dull red flashes in the sky. A similar glow illuminated the horizon to the left. And high overhead passed heavy shells with a deep, echoing rumble, coming no one knew whence and bursting no one knew where.

The newest lieutenant—whose training on the Front had been in the more or less stable positions of the Toul sector—looked up nervously as if he could see the projectiles on their way over. He grew more and more irritable at each enforced halt.

A 77 struck on the crest of the hill several hundred

meters away—obviously an "over" from an adjustment on some suspected road to the north. The new lieutenant lost all patience.

"Look at it," he demanded. "Look at it. A good American traffic policeman handles as much traffic as this every day and keeps it straightened out. But here we have to crawl and creep. Man, if they shell this road we'll be caught like rats in a trap."

"Yeah," I admitted. The lad was right. But one progresses in patience as one remains in an army.

In the Art Institute at home there used to hang a painting of action and color—"The Piece in Danger." It was a thing alive with movement—charging horses, a tilting limber, a piece with one wheel in the air; and surrounding all a surging atmosphere of blood and battle. That was the old artillery. It would take a better artist to paint a thrill into a ride to the Front behind a string of ration carts and an asthmatic tank. I went to sleep and fell off my horse.

The column wound down through another ruined town, unoccupied save for a French guard, a road marker, an M.P. and a functionary in an automobile.

"Stop that column," bawled the man in the car.

The guns clanked forward without a pause.

"Halt that column," he repeated.

"Who are you?" I inquired.

"I am Colonel Blank of the Somethingth Something-or-other and your damned artillery is taking up all the road. Halt that column. I'm going by." I remembered how Lieut. Hudson had become a major general merely by raising his voice in the dark, and I told the colonel to go to hell. Presumably he went. An interesting experiment.

There followed a long, uneventful interval of silence. The obstruction ahead seemed to have been removed

at least partly, and the halts were not so frequent.

The road was flanked on either hand by a stretch of shell-made bad lands—a desolation that savored of the pit. The stench of mustard was over it—stale gas that did not tingle in the nostrils but made one yearn to vomit. Craters, pits, trenches, torn and scattered barbed wire met the eye everywhere until the mist closed down upon it like a veil over chaos.

Cut into the bank at close intervals were old gun positions surrounded by the usual salvage of wicker cases, iron powder-boxes, and yellow-nosed projectiles. Then came kilometers of shell dumps, an occasional deep dugout with its entrance opening to the south, and graves.

It seemed that the vista of graves would never end. German crosses in black and white, American crosses of unfinished pine with little aluminum dog-tags tacked in the center. Heavy payment had been exacted for the possession of this particular bit of hell's half acre. It was a shriveled, distorted, uncanny terrain, marked unmistakably with the brand of Cain, and leaden-hued in the fog like the face of a corpse.

Another ruined village gleaming white like a plot of tombstones. Then came a road—a state highway wide enough for three carriages to pass abreast and still well paved, despite four years of bombardment. From the south came the sound of trotting horses and the jangling of chains. No doubt what that meant.

"French artillery," I told the lieutenant. "We'll have to beat 'em to the crossing or stick around until a couple of brigades go by." Then to the battery:

"Trot! Yoh! Step 'em out! The French are going to cut us off . . ."

It was impossible to get the column into a trot in the badly paved byroad because of the ruts and shell holes. But the jaded horses gave a fair imitation of movement and the two columns reached the crossing almost simultaneously.

An American M.P. decided the race by holding up an arm and stopping the on-coming French. The lead drivers accepted his decision philosophically and reined in. The M.P. bekoned to us to proceed.

The excited horses of the first section pranced and slipped across the road, then swung slightly to the right as the wheel team stepped into the traces for the turn. Then the vagabond reel cart which no no one had noticed in the mist, collided with a kilometer post and upset squarely in our path.

Trust a Frenchman to see every advantage in a traffic situation. The poilu artillerymen knew that even an M.P. would hesitate to delay their column until an overturned fourgon could be righted. They did not wait for further permission.

"Ghee! Allez! Jobah!" They were off again at a trot. French artillery never moves any other way unless possibly at a gallop. They filled the road at once with a mélange of vehicles; chariots, fourgons, guns, caissons, carts, officers' buggies—a strange array for a battle but not at all remarkable to the Americans, who had turned their attention to the reel cart. They had known what would happen. They had seen these cannoneers and cannons of their allies on the road before.

I got a flash of intelligence some hours late, and ceased to comment on the driving ability of the reel-cart pilots. As soon as the carriage was righted I had it pushed into a ditch. Immediately we pulled out into the road.

"You can't do that," warned the new lieutenant. "You'll stall traffic here for keeps in a minute."

I disagreed with him.

"We've been playing this little game of hog-the-road with the French ever since we left Valdahon," I told him. "Sometimes they win and sometimes we do. . . . But we never block any traffic. Lookee!"

The lieutenant turned in his saddle and what he saw was a revelation. He had learned his book of artillery maneuver on a drill field. He had recieved his diploma from the school of theory believing that a battery to move effectivly must move as a unit with many lieutenants and a sprinkling of section chiefs to preserve its integrity on the march.

He saw for a moment the hub-to-hub proximity of the two columns—one occupying two-thirds of the road and moving at a trot, the other barely able to turn at a walk out of the byroad into the space that remained. Then before his eyes these tumbling patterns in a kaleidoscopic movement resolved into an orderly compound. The French column absorbed the American or the American absorbed the French, depending on the point of view. Automatically the pace slowed down to a walk and the guns went forward. There were a few smothered exclamations in divers languages but no interchange of comment between the two batteries. The French, in leaving too much space at the right of the road and a little too much distance between carriages, had lost the contest and knew it. Without command they pulled over to the left, urged their horses to the trot again, and presently had disappeared in the mists to the north.

There was no mistaking the identity of Romagne.

It was marked by a great black and white sign painted across the side of a building. Under it were long black arrows pointing directions to neighboring towns, the names of which appeared in Gothic lettering.

A line of trucks, bearing the insignia of a strange division, was drawn up at the side of the main street. The artillery passed to the left. The tired gunners gazed with interest at the buildings and the signs they bore.

The street was a winding path of cobbles that seemed lost in its journey between long rows of ancient stone walls and crumbling buildings with overhanging gables. The houses were a picture of desolation, the more impressive because obviously recent. Window glass crunched under the cannon wheels. Shutters here and there hung by a single hinge. From more than one window they had fallen entirely and lay in the street.

SOLDATENHEIM, read an inscription in Germanesque lettering over the door of one large building. . . . Evidently the inmates of the *Soldatenheim* had taken their flight seriously, for they had left a trail of abandoned household goods to mark their passing. The leg of a chair lay across the threshold; where the rest of it had gone, none could hazard a guess. On the three steps leading to the street were several handfuls of feathers that probably had leaked out of a feather bed in transit. Plainly our enemies were determined to make their retreat as comfortable as possible.

Somewhere in the distance toward the Front, the tank or tractor was rumbling again and that meant trouble. The battery had halted almost abreast of the Soldatenheim and the cannoneers and drivers

dismounted. The sound of the shell fire had become plainer now. Some H.E. was bursting no great distance west of the town.

Across the street from the Soldatenheim was a two-story building partly wrecked by a shell. The sign Feldpost was still visible on top of the doorway. Beneath it was tacked the insignia of the victors and the notice, "Gas Dump—89th Division—mask replacements, supplies."

Stamping to restore circulation to a pair of feet that were numbed and cold, I walked over to the Feldpost and looked in at the doorless entryway. Some five or six men lay asleep on the floor of the passage amid a litter of masks and boxes and kegs. There was a peculiar odor hanging about the building. It seemed reminiscent of disinfectants until I recognized it indisputably as chlorine. Thereupon it ceased to be interesting, for chlorine is the most popular scent in any well-regulated gas office.

From the front door of the dump one could see every now and then a comet-like trail across the night to the north: tracer shells. Why were they firing them—or who was firing them—I could not tell. But they were beautiful to look at. I sat down on the doorstep and watched them.

Away over to the west a Klaxon was sounding. The column stirred uneasily as the echoes floated back. By now the men had become sufficiently used to gas signals not to be alarmed by a siren call a kilometer away—but for all that, the grim dread of an enemy one cannot see and can detect only with difficulty and danger is not easily conquered.

I noticed that the infantry posts did not take up the alarm as had been the fashion at Avocourt and

Very, and I gave credit to this new division. An outfit that behaved well under gas would behave well under fire.

As I watched, a doughboy kitchen drew in under the overhanging eaves. The driver unhitched the mules and a pair of K.P.s pushed the soup cannon back into a protected area way. An M.P. strolled over to pass the time of day.

"Bill's gone," said one of the K.P.s without waiting for the M.P. to speak.

"Gone," echoed the M.P.

"Yeah, gone," put in another of the kitchen crew. "Gone for keeps. Feenee!"

"But it ain't two hours since I seen him here an' they ain't been a shell busted since." The M.P. was only superficially incredulous. Disappearances are not infrequent in battle.

"It ain't twenty minutes since I seen him," put in the K.P. "But he's feenee."

"Shrapnel kill him or gas?"

"He ain't dead. Heinie's got him."

"Prisoner, you mean? How the hell could a cook get that close to the war?"

"He was drivin' the ration cart an' the damned mules runs away an he steers right through Bantheville into the front line—mules, ration cart, hot coffee, doughnuts—the whole damned works." Pause. "An' them doughnuts was darbs, too."

There may have been something humorous in the sad fate of the ration cart steward. But the M.P. and the kitchen crew did not see it just at that time. A cook perhaps might be classed as expendable—even such a cook as Bill, who, judging from subsequent conversation, must have been a man of considerable attainments—but a cartload of rations,

part of which consisted of doughnuts—ah, that was the loss irreparable.

The obsequies over the late Bill ceased, however, when a couple of cannoneers, tired of waiting for the procession to move on, essayed to explore the house next to the opening where the rolling kitchen had stopped. Judging from surface indications it wasn't much of a house.

To begin with, it was on the south side of the street and there most of the shells had fallen. Secondly, the wreckage of a wagon and a maze of shattered cummunication wires, part of a system that had run from a switchboard in the Feldpost, effectually blocked the front door. It was its very inaccessibility that had appealed to the investigative instinct of the cannoneers. But for all its ruins the cooks had taken an interest in this house.

"Beat it," they commanded it unison. Which theme the bearer of the sad tidings of Bill's capture proceeded to develop through endless movements.

"Whatcha doin' here anyway?" interposed another of the crew.

"Whatsut to yuh?" replied one of the cannoneers. "Think yuh own this town? Who are you? Mr. France or Mr. Republique?"

"You been stealin' our bread," charged the nearest K.P.

"Stealin' hell, we gotta wagonload o' bread. We don't need no bread. An' besides they ain't no bread in that house. Nothin' but Willy. We looked."

Even a hardened K.P. had no option but to believe so manifestly truthful a statement.

"Well, maybe they moved the dump," he conceded reluctantly. "But if it 'ud been there youda been stealin' it . . ."

Trouble would have followed of a certainty, save for the intervention of the gas officer, who was trying to sleep.

He observed in a pained voice that itinerant cannoneers and doughboy cooks were a nuisance beyond his poor powers of description; that this was the Front where peace and harmony and quiet should prevail; that the war was coming to a pretty pass if a man wasn't allowed to sleep nights; and that the would-be belligerents could go to war if they wanted to fight.

That of course ended the argument. An officer—even a gas officer—was entitled to some consideration; and after all there was no point in quarreling over the theft of bread that had never been there to be stolen.

The new lieutenant, chafing at the delay, presently came across the street and reported that he was going to find an M.P. and "do something toward straightening this tangle out."

I told him to help himself—it was his job if he thought he could get an M.P. to do anything. Such blockades as this, I figured, usually straightened themselves out without the M.P.s and argument never hastened things any. The new lieutenant mounted and disappeared toward the head of the column.

He returned in fifteen minutes, wrathful but better acquainted with the ills that beset wartime traffic.

"It's a caterpillar," he announced as he dropped out of his saddle. "That and a G.P.F. are in the ditch—the gun is pulled halfway across the road. And everybody's just standing around doing nothing.

"Why doesn't the caterpillar pull out?" I inquired with the natural curiosity of one who had seen caterpillars on the march before.

"It's a mystery to me," he admitted. "I asked one officer what the matter was and he said they were out of gasoline. And I asked him if they intended to get any and he said he supposed they did. And I asked him why somebody didn't do something and he said he didn't know. . . . Oh, this army! It's always like that. We'll be here all night before those blockheads decide to make an attempt to get out of that hole. . . . A 155-long sinking in the mud. It'll soon be in so deep nothing can pull it out. . . ."

He was interrupted by a sudden movement in the column. The battery ahead had mounted up and presently came the sound of rumbling carriages. In spite of the insurmountable obstacle and the general inability of M.P.s and caterpillar drivers to remove it, the long line of cannon was pushing on once more.

"Well, I'm damned," declared the lieutenant. We both climbed stiffly to our saddles.

There was a V in the highway toward the end of town where an arrow labeled Bantheville pointed toward the right and a second with a smeared inscription gave a direction to the left. Up the road toward Bantheville four-star caterpillar rockets—the "all's well" signal—crawled up from the horizon, trailed a brief arc across the sky and expired.

Obviously the path of the artillery lay elsewhere.

Machine guns stuttered intermittently. An occasional G.I. can rumbled over toward Cierges.

There was a slight upgrade to the left. One got a momentary glimpse of an engineering dump. Then

came a railroad track curving northward—a military line, apparently.

Across the track was a graveyard—a civilian graveyard which cuckoos from the Rhineland apparently had appropriated for their own. War and death make strange bedfellows, as witness a Prussian cross over the gate. Not even an ancient graveyard could escape the mark of conquest. A Prussian cross! God of battles, what a marker for a French cemetery!

There was the skeleton of a burned truck just under the wall. On the twisted frame sat three doughboys munching hard-tack.

"It's about time you came," greeted one. "They're giving us hell up there." The crackle of the machine guns seemed to bear him out.

A few hundred meters farther on the road curved a bit. One could see even in the moonlight that this was the middle of a shallow valley. The road seemed to have been cut out of the side of a hill. An embankment rose abruptly to the south. A gentle slope fell away to an unseen creek bed toward the north.

Just where the highway straightened out there was a break in the embankment with a wagon road leading to higher ground on the left. Here a road marker greeted the leaders of the column.

"Up the hill till you hit the narrow gauge," he directed. "Turn right and look out for a big shell hole. It's mustard and it's fresh."

The battery pulled across the road, blocking for the moment the incoming tide of empty caissons, limbers, wagons and tractors.

Instant confusion resulted—but that seemed to

be the usual characteristic of artillery movement.

The hill was muddy. The tired little horses slipped and balked. The drivers, hitherto silent, cursed them roundly in English and encouraged them in French. I turned over my horse to an orderly and went up the grade afoot.

The narrow gauge proved to be the remains of a *Feldbahn.* Artillery had been making a mess of the right of way and that not so long ago. The shell crater which the guide had mentioned was plainly visible in the half light, for the fumes rising like smoke from its depths possessed a dim luminosity of their own. Also there was no mistaking its identity. The stench of mustard and garlic was everywhere.

The battery turned right, avoiding the shell hole, dodged a barbed wire entanglement and a machine-gun fox hole, then moved back toward the road along which pieces of paper on stakes marked the gun positions.

As usual a strange emplacement. . . . It was on a slope descending toward the enemy; it was without natural camouflage; it was between a narrow gauge track and a road—two places likely to attract the attention of enemy batteries; and, shades of the little red book, that wasn't the half of it. Flying clouds scurrying across the sky to the south broke long enough for a shaft of moonlight to lift from the shadow a score of objects till then unseen. . . . A row of little domed shacks on the hillside near the track. . . . Another row of similar sheds across the road. . . . A huge sign suddenly looming up with the message: *Eintritt Verboten.* An artilleryman needed only a glimpse of the place to give him a clew.

The regiment had unlimbered for action in an old ammunition dump.

"The captain wishes to see you," an orderly told me as I was pondering these matters. I waited to see the fourth piece dropped into place and followed.

The way led between two piles of aërial torpedoes, past a tin shed in and about which other shells were stacked promiscuously, down a steep declivity, over the broken rails of the narrow gauge, across the carcasses of two Germans and a horse, and thence into the road. The battery P.C. was in a fox hole in the north bank.

"Get in all right?" queried Wheeler.

I reassured him.

"Then get under cover right away," he directed. "This is a hot spot, Bob. I got a place across the road all picked, and came back here to get the detail and instructions to plot out position. When I got to the place again, a coast artillery outfit had a reconnaissance detail in it and wouldn't move out. I gave 'em the place and took this one. Hadn't been gone ten minutes when a 210 slid over the hill there and pooped off the whole damned smear . . . the whole reconnaissance detail. They're over on the hillside yet—just ahead of those heavies."

The captain paused and ran a hand over his eyes. It was obvious that he still could see the corpses lying about the spot that was to have been our position.

"There's going to be hell to pay in here," he declared. "They've been plastering the hill north of here all day with a shot every now and then into the graveyard. I've been worring about you all night."

I recalled that we had had previous experience with rotten positions and that we had survived while properly located batteries had been knocked off.

"We're all right," I said. "Our side of the hill

seems to be broken up with shell holes and sheds and wreckage. It will be hard for an aëroplane to locate new outlines in that mess even though we're short of camouflage. We'll dig shelter trenches right away. This is no worse than Very."

But I didn't sound convincing even to myself. Wheeler knew I was lying. Romagne is one of those places destined by God to be a hot spot and so long as there is fighting in this vicinity I doubt that it it will be anything else.

Daylight added nothing to the pleasantness of the prospect. The entire valley from the edge of the town to the woods on our left is filled with corrugated iron huts, stacks of large-caliber shells and the scattered wreckage of battle. The narrow gauge railroad has been an object of particular concern to the artillery. There are water-filled shell holes to mark the accuracy of the American adjustment three weeks ago, and soot-filled craters that tell a story of some excellent German gunnery at a very recent date.

Not all the sheds in the ammunition park remain intact. Here and there are great blackened holes with large scraps of shell about them. Just below the battery hundreds of hand grenades are scattered about—thrown from a dump by a mighty explosion. There is no need for artillery observation for a zone fire on this hill. It has been done before . . . and, as any artilleryman will have to admit, it has been done well.

. . . . . .

There was a typewriter in the reel cart. It makes possible the recording of much detail in the journal of our arrival here . . . detail that might as well be

left out. None of us is ever going to forget this place.

. . . . . .

The morning was quiet. The men hoisted their camouflage nets and dug gun pits. Occasionally a heavy lumbered over to land with a dull, half-heard explosion south of town. At infrequent intervals one saw a puff of smoke on the crest to the north, followed immediately after by an ear-splitting crack. But the cannonading has been desultory. Heinie seems to be resting and the American batteries along the road have not yet received ammunition.

There are some unpleasant rumors in the air. One is to the effect that the battery kitchen was met on the road last night by one of the corps inspectors and ordered back to the Cheppy-Very crossroads. Another is that the ration cart, containing the field range which might have been brought up in just such an emergency, took the wrong road and cannot be located by mounted couriers. There are some less disconcerting tales about a possible counterattack and a shaky line of infantry up ahead. What are such trifles in comparison with another twenty-four hours without food? . . .

Tifft and I have unpacked our bed rolls in a hut that is only partly occupied by shells. The curved roof leaks a bit owing to jagged holes punched by H.E. fragments, and the cracks in the floor are so wide that they feel uncomfortable even through layers of blankets. But after all as a shelter it is better than a pup tent. The big shells are not fused and it seems hardly likely that anything less than a direct hit can set them off. There is proof of the latter theory. One of the projectiles in the lower layer seems to have been smashed by a huge fragment. A resinous-looking explosive is scattered

about the room. But quite obviously, since the shed remains intact, there was no burst. It is to be hoped that the shells will form a protective wall between some sleeping artillerists and itinerant bits of 77.

The name of the projectiles—"Minnen-Name" to quote the card left by the German ordnance officer—is "Thea." Truly a pagan goddess.

The Hot Spot

ROMAGNE-SOUS-MONTFAUCON, *October 26.*—Some ammunition came up last night.

A truck train brought it and threw the boxes into the little ditch at the roadside without regard to order or the needs of the battery. Some of the cases smashed and the shells rolled out into the middle of the highway to be crushed by tractors and menace friendly traffic.

But remonstrance failed to improve the situation. The men of the train were plainly frightened. They had run into a harassing fire on the road near Cierges and knew that Romagne would speedily come in for one of the same sort.

So they dumped the boxes over the sides of the trucks in a semi-panic, not once considering that they were in graver danger of being blown to heaven by the dropping of a box of fuses than they might ever approach through the haphazard fire of our friend Gerry.

Once unloaded, the trucks shot into the middle of the road and disappeared around the curve into Romagne, crowding Front-bound traffic into the opposite ditch. The cannoneers crawled wearily out of fox hole and pup tent and set to work righting the

muddle. Shells were hauled to their proper battery positions in wheelbarrows and fourgons. It was long after midnight before we began to hope that the distribution would be completed and the boxes laid away before Heinie started to shell.

At about one o'clock this morning a mustard shell broke in the road near the second battalion P.C. And thus hell came to Romagne.

This is no untried division up ahead. The Klaxons did not begin their wild alarm until long after one could smell the acrid stench of the gas. There were fifteen or twenty dull explosions before one realized that the cool night air had acquired a taint. Then one man sneezed, another announced a tingling in his throat. And a third raced for the horn.

Thereafter throughout the night one never drew a pure breath. The crispness of the night air was gone. And in its place even now lingers the rank odor of mustard, the biting tang of arsenic and the vile, nauseating effluvium of unburied dead.

At daylight came a zone fire on the road, and the hills to the west and north of Romagne—whiz-bangs, 150s and gas.

A squad of doughboys, on the way back to the reserve, paused in the inviting shelter of the cemetery wall to wait for a lull in the firing.

An artilleryman warned them to keep going. As I ran down from the battery position to order them out of so obvious a trap I could hear him shouting to them:

"Keep moving. Don't loiter on a crossroads, for God's sake, and get away from that cemetery."

But the wall gave a sense of security. The infantrymen merely huddled closer together.

A 150 hit in the road near the old engineering dump

and tore a horse to bits. The animal had been hitched to a ration cart and one came suddenly to the realization that a man had been driving and that his mangled body now hung in the wreckage of the limber.

A second shell burst in the railroad track and the lifting smoke disclosed a clutter of rails and a man—an engineer—with a look of surprise rather than agony on his face, staggering over to the ditch to die.

The third shell took ten feet of coping from the top of the graveyard wall.

The fourth, a second later, crashed into the road. Not one of the doughboys moved again. One was decapitated. His body was perhaps the least broken of them all. The burial detail which later carried the squad back to its last rest camp, made no effort to separate individuals. An ambulance load of unidentifiable remains was buried in a single hole and eight aluminum tags fixed to eight crosses at the head of it.

Meanwhile the bombardment swept into the town.

The medical corps detachments of perhaps a dozen batteries were rushing wildly about, searching not for those who had been wounded—they could not walk a hundred feet without tumbling over piles of them—but for those wounded who might be saved.

Blood flowed in the gutters of Romagne, a steady, sickening stream.

The M.P. stationed at the Bantheville crossroads came running through the town. He was holding his left wrist with his right hand. The bone of his left arm seemed to be intact, but the meat was hanging from it in strips.

There was a look of indescribable terror in his face—a terror not altogether free from bewilderment.

He was staring straight ahead, glassy-eyed and unseeing, stumbling over wounded men and corpses and blundering by first-aid stations shouting, "They got me . . . They got me . . ."

A surgeon dropped the pulseless wrist of a coast artilleryman whose tin hat had failed to stop a fragment of H.E. and arose to confront him.

"Shut up, you big cry-baby," he commanded in a tone of infinite contempt. "There's nothing the matter with you."

Fright gave way to surprise in the M.P.'s face. Then he fell senseless in the road. The surgeon assembled the scraps of his arm and bound them together with a bandage.

An ambulance was almost at the railroad crossing bound west when a shell exploded under it. The engine stopped with a grunt. The driver's body, headless and horrible, fell forward. It caught some way in the straps of the side curtains and hung there.

It would be difficult to say just what has made this particular bombardment more terrible than those which fell on us at Sheep Shank Hill by the Very board walk. It was not long. In half an hour the whiz-bangs had ceased to burst. The clouds of mustard had lifted. The sun was shining serenely over a landscape beautiful in the coloring of autumn.

But the gutters still are running red.

Perhaps that is it—the deadly accuracy of the fire . . . the bold confidence of it . . . not a wasted shell . . . a tremendous toll of life exacted to pay for a hundred or so 88s.

A 155 rifle down the road has gone into action. Its smashing echo is a soothing sound. Too late for counterbattery work, perhaps, but not too late for

reprisal fire. God knows the worst of Gerry's target practice is that we have to take it standing.

At 10:30 this morning the circus came over.

The "circus," Von Richthofen's famous aërial acrobats, would have been quite a diversion save for the fact that this was war and that German aviators do not generally fly for the fun of it.

The sky was red with them—beautiful, graceful, swift machines that dipped and rose and played about one another like a flock of crimson swallows.

And there was an allied plane in the picture. It was flying low. One could make out the insignia as it passed over—an American machine. Two men were in it but they were not concerned with the beautiful flight of the scarlet birds. The pilot was visible only for a moment as the ship banked for a sudden turn. But the observer was in plain view, leaning out of the fusilage, his machine gun barking across the tail.

The air was full of stuttering death. The echoes of it floated to earth so tempered by distance that it was difficult to imagine any connection between it and the wonderful squadron that circled in the glittering sunlight above the feathery clouds. For a full two minutes the artillerymen of a dozen batteries gazed spellbound at the spectacle.

Then suddenly one roused himself.

It was a medical man who had set up a German Maxim on a post across the road. He ran to his gun and, as the leader of the red circus swooped quickly for a closer view of the terrain, he aimed and squeezed the trigger. And after that was bedlam.

From every gun position came the chatter of Cho-cho, Hotchkiss, Maxim or Lewis—some of the cadences quick as the tattoo of a pneumatic riveter,

others slow and halting like the rattle of a billing machine. Here and there incendiary bullets cut a golden streak across the sky to fall far short of the red planes, evidencing at once the futility of the fire that continued, notwithstanding.

Rifles and pistols, too, began to crack, and presently the black cloud of an anti-aircraft H.E shell burst above Romagne.

All of which did no good. The American plane streaking downward as well as south, disappeared behind the crest of the hill presumably dropping to earth in a friendly spot behind the old Hindenburg Line. The circus veered to the left and leisurely surveyed the artillery emplacements. The cocksureness of the thing was maddening.

Up and down the road they flew, sometimes high, sometimes low, unconcerned alike with anti-aircraft shells and machine gun fire. They circled the town and signaled overs and shorts by machine gun as the enemy artillery adjusted with time fuse shell on the steeple of the Romagne church. Then, their work neatly accomplished, they turned north again.

A wonderful group of fighters, the circus . . . keen sportsmen—if risk of life be any indication; skillful flyers, as they proved at every twist and turn and dive; soldiers! There is no denying them their due. They are Germany's chief contribution to the epic heroism of the Great War.

We did a bit of firing this afternoon and this evening—not much, a few hundred rounds of gas into the woods north of Bantheville. But at any rate it was action.

Wheeler gets word that we will have more of these little jobs to do. But manifestly it is not on the cards that we shall linger here messing around with trifles.

More guns are coming up. Coast artillery is all along the road to the left—coast artillery a couple of thousand yards from the front line. If one reads the signs correctly G.H.Q. expects the next big smash to hurl the Boche into the Meuse.

We have been without food just about forty-eight hours now. I went into town this morning looking for some relief from the Y.M.C.A.

The first goat I met wouldn't sell me anything because we are army artillery. His orders as a Christian gentleman and Y.M.C.A. secretary directed him to prevent starvation only in some other kind of artillery.

I reminded him that his dump was within the field of fire of our first piece and that an accidental shot could put him out of business. He said he would report me to G.H.Q.

I also reminded him that the spirit of Christianity might normally be expected to have something to do with an organization that called itself a CHRISTIAN association. I asked him if he thought Christ would stand haggling over whether hungry men were stamped with one numeral or another.

He was still obstinate and I was about to go out for a detail to raid his dump and take what we needed, when a field secretary came in. He gave me a sackful of hard-tack and a couple of boxes of cocoa without argument.

The field men of the Y.M.C.A. aren't such bad eggs. They have some idea of what is going on. As for the rest of them their ancestors scratched their ears with their hind feet.

The argument didn't prove worth while. There wasn't enough hard-tack to go around and somebody spoiled the cocoa by putting salt into it.

On the way back from the Y.M.C.A. I discovered a baby sitting in the road hammering on a machine gun belt with a copper drift. It was a little boy about four years old. A cook in a coast artillery outfit near by said that his outfit had found the child and adopted him, unaware that any such trip as this impended.

The spot where the kid was sitting was only a hundred feet or so from the graveyard wall where the eight doughboys were killed this morning.

An ambulance was coming east across the tracks as I stopped. I halted it and hoisted the baby aboard despite a respectful protest from the cook. As nearly as I can figure out this is no fit place for infants.

Zone Fire

ROMAGNE-SOUS-MONTFAUCON, *October 27.*—Another bit of firing last night.

While we were at it the kitchen came up.

Jack Foran, the mess sergeant, looked as if he hadn't slept for a week—nor shaved. He stopped his staggering mules in front of the battery and asked to be shown to a possible location.

"We've been all over France," he confided. "Every time we came to a crossroad some M.P. would chase us on to a road that wasn't on our map.

"There wasn't any chance to argue. We just had to follow instructions. We couldn't find our echelon and they wouldn't let us come back to the battery. We've been through Montfaucon, Very, Cheppy, Varennes, and maybe Verdun, too. We went through a lot of places in the dark and I wasn't able to get their names. We haven't slept since the morning the battery came in here. And we haven't eaten anything but tinned Bill."

I sympathized with him as the occasion seemed to warrant.

"Too bad," I told him. "The boys would trade all the turkey they've been eating up here just for a moving picture of a cook and a mess sergeant living on canned Willy."

. . . A shell lit behind the first piece and tore out one end of the personnel trench. The adjustment on the church steeple was proving its effectiveness. No one was hurt. Those of the gun crew not engaged in the firing gathered up their picks and shovels and set to repairing the ruined fox hole.

I looked about the landscape and found no encouragement.

"There isn't any protection anywhere around here," I pointed out to Foran. "This road is a target and on the theory that the target is the safest place during artillery fire, you ought to be best off somewhere along the road. On the other hand the Germans have good observation and trained gun crews. They've been making the road pretty hot, so you'd better drop anchor in the little draw just ahead of us here."

The kitchen crew tore down a section of fence, turned into the field north of the road and picked a camping spot between two sheds that until recently had been used as storehouses for potato-masher hand grenades.

There was a supper of hot coffee and goldfish shortly after that—the first meal in about sixty hours and the men did not stop to criticize the menu or the cooking.

The first battalion medical wagon was in the same little hollow, naked and unafraid—not a strip of

camouflage, natural or artificial within five hundred meters of it. The horses were tied to a tree near the road. Lieut. Duffy slept in his wagon. His assistants occupied the ground beneath it.

The day had been a busy one for the medical corps. Several engineers had been wounded in a zone fire down the road near the coast artillery positions. In addition there had been a few artillerymen victims of stray shells. So far the enemy fire had not been concentrated on the gun emplacements but it was increasingly accurate and deadly.

The sun set at 6 o'clock. At 7 o'clock it was dark. We finished our job of firing and settled down for the night. Duff was getting ready to go to bed when he noticed a kitchen belonging to an outfit of 75s to the right of us, turning off the road near him. He stepped over to promote a bite of food and thereby saved his life.

He had gone perhaps a hundred meters when a shell hit on the crest behind him. He could hear the spent fragments whining about his ears. Almost immediately came a second shot in the same place—then two more in quick succession.

The first shell of the second salvo dropped in front of the medical wagon. The second was a direct hit. Duff went back to his former headquarters only long enough to find a blanket. He slept for the rest of the night at the edge of the ditch in the lee of a dead horse.

This morning showed the entire draw littered with wreckage. Bits of medical supplies were hashed indiscriminately with chunks of mule and remnants of German shell dumps. The counterslope was like a poppy field with red potato mashers. Signal torpedoes in colors innumerable lay circled for a hundred

yards about a crater where once had been a rocket shelter.

The kitchen crew was at work but plainly did not find much joy in the job.

"We can't live more than two nights in a place like this," said the mess sergeant. "None of us slept. We just lay in our bombproof pup tent listening to 'em come over the crest and down the slope. The chunks of G.I. can would rattle down on us and the earth would rise up under us and we'd shake hands and say good-by. And there's too much noise in this valley. A 210 a mile off is loud enough to smash an eardrum—and a zone fire under your nose is too damned close. Have we permission to move this morning?"

As he was discussing the matter a high velocity naval shell of heavy caliber passed over with a brief screech and scraped the lead team of mules off a ration cart that had just pulled in off the road.

"Go ahead and move," I told him. "I'll fix it up with Wheeler."

So the early morning meal of bacon and tack was served with alacrity while the crew prepared to seek green fields and pastures new.

But the kitchen did not escape without a further taste of war. Two cooks and three K.P.s were packing up to move when a big shell of the whiz-bang family dropped out of the sky and found a home about three feet from the oven door. Its coming was strictly unannounced. There was an ear-splitting screech almost simultaneous with the burst itself but it was a brief screech that was lost almost as soon as heard, in the tremendous smash of the explosion.

A consciousness of imminent death flashed to every man in the neighborhood . . . a consciousness vague

but certain. And then happened one of those things for which only Providence and German fuses can assume responsibility. The big shell went down about thirty feet and camoufletted.

The earth pushed up like the crust of a huge pie. One of the K.P.s dived headforemost into a bucket of mess-kit water. A chunk of sod detached by the explosion hit Con Turner in the back of the neck and spilled him forward. He collided on his way to the ground with a stack of lumber. Inasmuch as his eyes were closed with mud and nervous indisposition, he had no way of determining that it was actually a lumber pile. It had all the feel of a shell fragment south bound. Con's nose spurted blood and the warm trickle convinced him that if he had not already departed this vale of tears he was well on his way.

"I'm killed," he diagnosed. Nobody disputed him —which was proof enough of the assertion, as he very well knew. Usually Con couldn't state an axiom without starting an argument.

"I'm killed," he repeated. But shortly thereafter the lumber pile collapsed and he discovered that there must be degrees of death. A second bump on his injured nose was too much even for a corpse and he had a resurrection immediately.

He stood up and looked about him in wide-eyed amazement, obviously expecting to see the pearly gates or the mangled remnants of his mortal associates. But what should have been mangled remnants somehow stayed pretty well together.

No one was hurt. Not even a crater marked the spot where the G.I. can had struck. There was a hole perhaps a foot in diameter where it had entered the ground and a mound some four feet high and ten feet across under the kitchen where previously the

ground had been level. The air was choking with the fumes of burned H.E.

The kitchen moved without further preliminaries, selecting a little spot above and behind the battery and almost immediately in front of a six-inch howitzer position. There was little or no defilade from the ubiquitous gun fire but there was a patch of woods which permitted some camouflage and the distance from active American guns was sufficient to warrant hope for a certain amount of freedom from accidental overs and shorts.

They went out onto the road at a gallop, the usually sedate mules startled into an incredible display of energy. They rolled westward with a great clanking of loose pots and with many an earnest curse from the kitchen crew. A turn southward was made at the western edge of the regimental sector where a busy field hospital was carrying on an endless routine of cut and patch with battered human material on the workbench.

The rolling kitchen veered out into the shell-pitted fields to pass the line of waiting ambulances but did not slacken its gait. A hospital is a poor place to loiter during shell fire.

More than one artillery officer turned to watch the progress of the soup cannon and ration carts up the long slope. Here was the action which the artists of our fathers' day ascribed to war—the excited drivers standing like charioteers; the man at the brake running along behind, keeping up with the procession only by hanging to the cart; the taut harness chains; the careening wheels; the plunging mules. One had always been led to expect something like this in battle and somehow one had always been disappointed. It was like a magnificent charge or a terror-stricken retreat.

And the Germans were quick to furnish the needed local color. A shell burst to the right—a dull burst that spoke plainly of mustard and threw a vaporous cloud of poison across the road ahead. Another dropped to the rear with a sharper crack . . . H.E. this, its advent marked by a geyser of black smoke. The drivers paid no attention to either of them. The cloud of the first shot was thinning. The second shell was plainly the worry of the hospital. The kitchen charged up the hill.

. . . . . .

A quick left turn brought the flying carts into the shelter of the little grove just over the crest. Mules were unhitched and taken at once to concealment in an old German barracks some five hundred meters distant. Long poles were cut down to serve as a framework for camouflage. Dry wood was obtained for the fires so that there might be a minimum of smoke.

"I guess we'll be safe enough here," said the mess sergeant. "We've been in worse places."

He might have gone further into the subject but just at that moment a shell hit the ration cart.

. . . . . .

The circus came over again at 4:30 this afternoon. As usual it was quite unhampered in its operations. For a moment the sky was aglow with tumbling red aëroplanes, aërial porpoises that seemed to have not a care in the world. They came even lower than on previous occasions—well within machine gun range—almost to the point where a pistol shot at them was a strong temptation.

Then suddenly a cloud of fluttering silver burst into vision under the ships.

Propaganda!

The entire artillery support of the immediate sector ceased work to stare up into the sky in joyous unbelief. Since the first rolling barrage crashed into the Argonne on the twenty-sixth of September, the process of battle had been a continuous smash forward for the Americans, a continuous hazardous retreat for the Germans. It is part of the psychology of propaganda that it is hardly likely to make an impression on a victorious enemy. When a bulldog grips you by the seat of the trousers, don't stop to debate with him. But as usual Heinie was working by the clock. He had been given a lot of printed matter to be distributed and he was carrying out orders.

There was a dash up the hillside toward the descending pamphlets. The greater part of the advance was halted before it crossed the road, by officers whose ingrown caution ascribed to Gerry a craftiness that had no basis in experience. They feared a machine gun attack as soon as the seekers for made-in-Germany doctrines should have assembled for the collecting of this heaven-sent manna.

But perhaps a hundred had crossed the road before the order to retire was sent out. They were waiting impatiently on the crest of the hill when the first of the papers fluttered into their eager hands.

Beautiful propaganda it was, too . . . made up like a newspaper, spiced with a Germanesque conception of American slang—a flavorous language suggestive of sugared sauerkraut, copiously illustrated with pictures of American prisoners at play in the amusement parks provided for their comfort and well-being by their considerate German captors. Even under shell fire the interest of the artillerymen in the kindness of the soft-hearted Boche was bound

to manifest itself. Most of the gunners were for getting captured right away. They were deterred only by the fact that to surrender they would first have to catch up with Gerry and they had been trying to do that since Avocourt.

There were baseball scores in the paper—a little late but still very American in complexion, ads for the Frankfort theaters, indicating that the gayety of Germany was suffering not at all from "England's little old second-hand war," a list of recently captured American prisoners, an editorial on the perfidy of England, a suggestion that the American army could end the war very quickly by laying down its arms (naïvely dodging the issue that Germany could end the war in the same manner and just as quickly) and an appreciation of General Pershing as an able tactician and leader.

Gerry showed one bit of uncommon intelligence. He quit shelling so that the assimilation of this predigested mental fodder might be uninterrupted.

In the Bracket

Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, *October 28.*—The zone fire on the road has become almost unbearable. Why we are still here is just one of those things that make artillery puzzling. I can't help but think of what Harry Warner once said about duck shooting: "Sometimes you get a good close shot into a flock so thick that you ought to be able to kill half a dozen with one brick. And you don't hit a damned one."

That's what's going on here. All day long, all night long Heinie is laying 'em down on the road. His fire is beautifully precise.

He has three ranges—twenty-five meters short of the road, twenty-five meters long of the road and the

middle of the bracket. The overs walk right down through our park and cover us with gas clouds and filth. If a horse shows his nose over here he is dead in five minutes. There has been a direct hit on the first piece. Two shells have torn out bits of the camouflage nets of the fourth piece. But so far no casualties.

The doughboys coming down for rest catch hell as they pass on toward Romagne. They have been taught to shun the road but they persist in walking twenty-five meters north of it or twenty-five meters south and so they are knocked off in groups of five and ten by the long and short shots.

The life of an M.P. at the Romagne-Bantheville crossroads is fifteen minutes and between M.P.s the infantrymen persist in stopping beneath the cemetery wall. Most of those who stop there remain permanently.

There has been plenty of sun. The blood that trickles along the ditch bottoms is rotting and the stench that comes over the hill is unspeakable.

Last night I dug a fox hole and moved into it from my ammunition shed. At midnight I was called out to direct some firing and while I was gone a shell obliterated my little trench. . . . I moved back to the shed. A direct hit gets you no matter where you are.

Saw Tomlin yesterday. He has been placed in command of F battery—the Suicide Club.

He seems to think that something is terribly wrong. All the dope that he has been collecting since 1890 has gone amiss. Here he is at the Front and the war is still going on. He feels a little hurt at the Germans for persisting against such odds. Of course he takes it philosophically. He is a little pleased with himself,

as anyone might be when success finally crowns such patient effort. After four futile attempts he is finally in a war.

There are rumors that I have been recommended for a captaincy. If it is to take me out of the battery they can keep the honors. In a thousand ways this outfit has shown that I mean something to it. These lads have offered me their last can of Willy—their last blanket. There'd be something wrong with me if I didn't love every damned one of them.

Wheeler has virtually let me run this battery. He is the best executive in the regiment. He knows how to assign a man to a job and then refrain from interference while the job is being done.

Phil Newman has been acting battalion adjutant vice Bob Stafford who is still in a hospital. He is now regimental operations officer or something. Maybe now that he is close to headquarters he'll get some of the breaks—anyway I hope so. He's still a lieutenant, despite his showing at two schools of fire and his record at the Front. And the sad-faced numskulls inherit the earth.

"Goodies for the Boys"

Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, *October 29.*—Last night was quite enough. A few shells were dropped into Romagne and the early morning interdiction fire along the road left five doughboys in the ditch directly below the gun positions. But with the dawn came peace. The sky was clear, the sun warm, the batteries along the red road silent.

Save for the still bodies under a horse blanket in the ditch, the horrors of the past few days very well could have been forgotten. The cannoneers of the first section built a little fire in the trail hole and were

frying hard-tack in bacon grease. A few squads of engineers were repairing the narrow gauge on the hill and the clink of iron on iron drifted lazily back. It seemed suggestive of a lull in a grand symphony where a single flute sings a thin plaint to a silent hall.

There was no movement along the road. Even the most hardy spirit in the motor corps had learned to respect Heinie's fire too well to brave it in daylight when night travel would bring about the same result. Infantry details were passing to and fro but they were hugging the natural protection of hollows and crests.

No one seemed to be doing anything or thinking of doing anything. A dozen artillerymen lay asleep in the bushes near the shell dump. The reconnaissance officer nodded over his map board. The captain hadn't begun to think of getting up—for it was that kind of a day. I sat down on a gun trail to write a letter. And then came distraction.

The men wouldn't have raised their heads to look at the circus. They knew that it was time for the fleet to come over and that it would come over according to schedule. Even an American plane would have received scant attention, for most of us remembered having seen American planes. But just as the first falling ship of Von Richthofen's carnival began to tumble out of the high altitudes, the gun guard of the first piece jumped up and stared into the road.

"Let's limber up an' go home," he yelled. "The war's over. Look who's here."

A very sketchy vehicle that looked as if it might be the salvaged remains of a fourgon—Mlle 1887—was being dragged westward by a pair of angular horses. In the driver's seat, beaming benediction on the wondering cannoneers, sat our chaplain—Charlie Chaplain.

"Where are you going, parson?" respectfully inquired one of the men.

"Up to the Front," was the drawled reply. "I have some goodies for the boys."

"You'd better get that damned wagon off the road or you'll catch hell," advised the soldier wholeheartedly.

"Oh, it's not dangerous here," contradicted the chaplain. "I haven't heard a shell all morning."

"That's no sign you ain't agoin' to."

A self-satisfied smile was the only answer. The chaplain knew his ground. Certainly there was nothing warlike about this peaceful spot—he had passed the five bodies in the ditch without noticing their presence. Why, the Front—the real Front—must be miles ahead of this. . . .

"I'm going to look around for a dugout here," he confided. "The heavies are making things very uncomfortable at Gesnes." And he looked over the terrain appraisingly. One could almost read his thoughts: War must play queer tricks with the nerves of soldiers when it led them to imagine that a silent, sleepy sector like this could be dangerous.

Four German balloons were up. Above us the circus drifted and dived without hindrance, still too high up for the clamor of its engines to be heard.

I got up to tell the parson to move on, but I was too late. As I reached the hedge I heard a voice bawling from a trench to the left—I think it was Charlie Wheeler—

"Get that wagon off the road, you damned fool!"

A look of pained surprise spread over the face of the chaplain. That a soldier should appear hysterical was bad enough. That an officer should show signs of nerves was unthinkable.

"I shall report this," he said. "I shall tell the colonel that I have been sworn at in the exercise of my functions as . . ."

At which point he dived for the road and lit in the stinking ditch.

A shell had screamed overhead. It burst a hundred yards south of the road—an over. The mud and fragments were still falling when the chaplain, who had seen nothing but beauty in the rustic quiet of the Romagne Front, flattened himself in the slime and wished that he had not come. The second shell was also an over. It was erratic and struck ten feet from a squad of infantry. Eight men dropped. Two got up. The third shot fell short of the road twenty meters. It killed two horses tied to a tree near battalion headquarters. The fourth was a dud.

The deflection changed after that. The first of a new salvo expunged the wagon. The fire crept down the road toward the coast artillery positions, strewing broken bones and bleeding wreckage in its wake. When the reports were so far away that they sounded dully like the echoing of a kettledrum, the visitor arose, wiped mud and blood from his uniform and gazed benignly about him.

"Upon my word, I hadn't expected it," he said to nobody in particular. "I think it would be best for me to get back at once."

Nobody deigned a reply. It seemed useless to accuse a blundering idiot of murder merely because he had allowed a wagon to stand in the middle of a road on a sunny day while enemy balloons swung at anchor on the horizon.

From where I stood I could see the stretcher bearers running up the hill to aid six doughboys probably past all need for ministration.

Midnight

Probably will be up for another couple of hours. A little more firing and quite a bit of unrest.

I had just crawled into my bed roll when a man came busting into the shack. He was wearing a gas mask. I reached for my own respirator and sniffed cautiously. There was no gas. I took the nose clip off again and sat up.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

The soldier took off his mask and grinned sheepishly.

"There's a gas shell busted down at the battery position," he said. "An' I got a lot of the goo-goo on my hands an' it burns a little. What am I going to do?"

I went down to the guns with him and found out what had happened. Number 2 in slapping a shell into the breech had miscalculated. The shell slipped and struck on the trail, breaking the porcelain container. There was an odd smell—something like bromine, but thin.

I had never been instructed in what to do in an emergency like this. But I remembered that most war gases are acid. So I sent the soldat to the kitchen for a cake of laundry soap with instructions that he wash himself with a thick paste of it. We took the shell out and buried it.

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust—if Heinie don't get you then you'll just naturally have to commit suicide.

The Sacrifice Platoon

A Joke from G. H. Q.

ROMAGNE-SOUS-MONTFAUCON, *October 30.*—

From C.O., 124 F.A.
To C.O., Battery A, 124 F.A.
Subject: Accompanying platoon.

1. You will send forward with the infantry at zero hour, D day, as an accompanying platoon, two guns and four caissons with full crews and two officers.

2. The officer in command of the platoon will report to P.C. Winn, 89th Division, before 5 o'clock to-night for further orders.

(Signed) ROGERS.

And there you have it.

Charlie Wheeler read the order and passed it across to me.

"Guess it's your job, Bob," he said. . . . "God, what an idea!"

"Who thought it up?" I inquired.

"G.H.Q.," he said. "I heard some talk of it last night but I didn't think they'd be nutty enough to try it. . . . Hell! The next thing they'll be putting bayonets on 75s."

He seemed genuinely disturbed—but probably no more than I was. Both of us know what happens to advance platoons.

"Honestly, Bob, I'd go myself if they'd let me,"

he said. "On my own say so I wouldn't wish a dog into that kind of a job." I knew he was telling the truth and I told him so, but what's the odds? You have to take the bad with the good.

Artillery has no business in front of infantry. The horses can't live more than a few minutes under fire. The enemy doesn't have to be told what will happen to him with 75s smashing him at a range of a few hundred meters direct laying. So he never lets it happen. The history of all advance platoons, advance guns, accompanying batteries or whatever you call them has hitherto been spectacular and heroic but brief. While it lasts the accompanying platoon may be of use to the infantry because it decoys all the fire on the sector, but that, of course, is small consolation to the cannoneers.

So young, so fair (and all that sort of thing), to die.

"Go on over and report to the general when you get ready," Charlie Wheeler directed. "Find out what he wants and then pick your own guns and your own crews. And God be with you."

"Sometimes they come back," I said.

"Yeah—" he admitted reluctantly. "Sometimes."

Before the time set for the conference with Maj. Gen. Winn things began to pop open along the road.

There had been desultory firing since daylight—a bombardment of the town by 150s and an occasional strafing of battery positions by 77s and whiz-bangs.

About 3 o'clock a shell hit on the crest of the slope where the heavies are emplaced. A moment before no one would have ventured to guess that there was a soldier within a hundred meters of the spot but the smoke hadn't cleared before men in O.D. began erupting from the hillside.

The shell had hit on an old German dugout and the door was turned the wrong direction for adequate protection. The occupants evacuated in a hurry—some few of them borne out on stretchers.

No further casualties until mess time, when the battery began moving by twos and threes over the knoll toward the kitchen's new position.

At about 4:30 o'clock there was a smashing report down the hollow where the second battalion was dozing under its camouflage nets. Promptly the Klaxon sounded and the men leisurely donned their masks—not that they feared the gas which a single shell might throw out, but because discipline demanded that they obey the warning of the horn.

The wearing of the mask, however, did not deter them from seeking their evening ration. They had learned from experience that a sneeze-gas or mustard attack is likely to be of short duration—that the gas doesn't travel uphill—and that a skillful eater may consume a meal, bite by bite, between shells.

They experienced no difficulty in traveling over the knoll. Of course it was impossible to see anything. In spite of all the windshield polishes issued by an army the eyepieces will cloud up ten seconds after the mask is put on and thereafter one proceeds by instinct and luck.

But the narrow gauge track led through the hollow toward the westward, then veered up the slope, reaching the high ground at a point only about two hundred meters from the kitchen. Even a blind man could follow a railroad track . . . So in straggling groups a minute or two apart, the men started for supper.

The leading group had nearly reached the top of of the incline when an unexpected hell broke loose

from a new quarter. Shells ranging in caliber from 88 to 210, seemingly put out by an entire brigade, began to screech out of the northwest. Hitherto all fire had come from a northeasterly direction.

Five shots landed simultaneously in the vicinity of the narrow gauge. They tore up three sections of rails and killed a man.

The men, although unable to see the bursts, sensed automatically the target on which the Boche had brought this sudden shift of fire. They turned at right angles and started for the crest.

It was a horrible journey, marked by repeated falls over the unburied corpses of last week, into the stinking shell holes of to-day and yesterday, over barbed wire and through brambles. And always as an incentive to speed came the cannonade from the northwest—the piling of old iron on the dinky railroad.

The battery had seen other specimens of German accuracy before this—but never one more terrifyingly successful. . . . Before the first of the fugitives got out of the zone of dispersion five new figures, an artilleryman, two engineers and two doughboys on their way to visit our kitchen, had joined the permanent camp on the side of the hill.

The fire shifted then. The heavies dropped out of the action and the whiz-bangs made a little hell of their own. Step by step we watched the leisurely advance toward the west—a cloud of tar-black smoke, a crash, and never a scream of warning. A new terror joined in—time-fuse shell. Gerry was searching the slope. The first salvo smashed in the tree tops near second battalion headquarters and tore the top from an ambulance. Dust swept over the hill like a fog.

One shell of the second salvo dropped almost under

the wall of a shack that once had served as a German barrack and now was occupied by American troops.

The effect was not so much that of an explosion as of total annihilation. The house seemed to be crumbling for an instant. Then it disappeared and a pall of black vapor hung in the air where it had been. Some high velocity heavy had done this.

A stray shot dropped in the fringe of woods just over the crest from the kitchen's new home. It was a 77 and its incoming wail was heard in time for the cannoneers who had reached the hilltop to drop face down.

Reavey, the K.P. who yesterday was digging for hours in the crater of the camouflet under the old kitchen position to find a piece of the shell which had missed him, was taken with panic. He made an attempt to beat the shell fragments to the covering crest and lost. A red-hot chunk struck him full in the back between the shoulders.

A lieutenant took off his gas mask to give first aid to Reavey. Another officer rushed down into the hollow to pass the call for litter bearers and a doctor. The shells continued to smash and take their toll.

Two men ran back toward the battery positions for help, found breathing difficult in masks, took their nose clips off and burned their lungs.

An atmosphere of dread had suddenly surged through the valley. One felt the tenseness in the arsenic-tainted air. One could see it in the strained faces of the men. One caught the note of it in the cries for first aid that echoed between the hills.

This was probably no worse than other red-gutter days at Romagne. It was the uncanny accuracy of the shooting that made it terrible. Each salvo counted its man. The steadily increasing strain on

the nerves of the cannoneers was telling. The jump-off can't come too soon if the old morale is to last under this constant hammering. . . . They doubly serve who stand and wait on the brink of the bottomless pit.

. . . . . .

I missed out on supper and walked west in the road toward P.C. Winn.

I had most of the road to myself. The bombardment was still going on and details that had business in the neighborhood were passing back and forth as far from the pavement as possible. On another day, perhaps, I, too, might have been cautious . . . but a man sentenced to be hanged does not worry about the poor ventilation of the death cell.

There was plenty of evidence of forthcoming activity all along the three kilometers of highway between the batteries and Gen. Winn's headquarters. The sector was a continuous artillery park—regiment on regiment of 75s—group after group of 155 rifles—ranged hub to hub. The ditches were one long ammunition dump.

An artilleryman could read much of the general plan in the arrangement of the guns . . . heavies and lights side by side and both of them within spitting distance of the front line trenches. This time the infantry would have to advance all the way out of the Argonne before it could get out of range, even though mobile artillery support might be delayed.

Heinie interrupted a study of these matters by dumping four whiz-bangs on to the hilltop. Some coast artillery stretcher bearers started up the slope. A Klaxon sounded warning of the evening gas attack. I went on.

P.C. Winn is a former German dugout in a little

thicket to the north of the road. A network of branches camouflages it from aërial observation—though this is an unnecessary precaution inasmuch as the dugout probably is plotted on every firing map between the American positions and the Rhine. But it has one advantage over every other post of command in the vicinity. It is one block of reinforced concrete—even to the sheltered gallery by which one enters it—with three vaulted chambers for the official business of the 89th Division.

At one end of the outer gallery a field range had been set up. Here a sad-faced cook was contriving a supper of fried meat and potatoes for the general. The other end was crowded with officers—mostly second lieutenants.

Two of the officers were discussing sorrowfully the fate of one "Jack" who had been wounded during the recent fire by "three pieces of shrapnel." It was a typical conversation. Doughboys are invariably wounded by shrapnel although Heinie seldom shoots it.

A whiz-bang added zest to the situation by blowing parts of the landscape into the general's soup. The lieutenants ducked below for cover. I took advantage of the situation to grab a handful of the fried potatoes from the stove. I had enough to worry about without wasting time on isolated whiz-bangs.

The general met the artillery delegation at 5 o'clock. It was plain to see that artillery sniping was none of his idea. He seems to know his book.

His instructions were terse and pointed:

"You will proceed to the northeast corner of the Bois de Bantheville. From there you will cross through the woods to the point where the road turns toward Remonville." He pointed out the spot on

the map. "You will follow the first wave of infantry and fire on such targets as the infantry commander may designate."

He did not look so much like an executioner as he sat there in the candlelight with his map spread out on his packing-box desk. It was so simple to say—this speech . . . So simple to illustrate with a firm forefinger set down on the green patch representing the Bois de Bantheville.

As for me I said nothing. I could read a map and I couldn't think up any good arguments.

"There aren't any roads through that woods," came an unexpected contribution to the dialogue. "Every path in that sector is knee-deep in mire. If artillery is to get to that point it will have to go west on the Bantheville road.

The speaker apparently was a captain of engineers. I had never seen him before. The general lost his official calm long enough to straighten up in his chair.

"Impossible, captain. Absolutely impossible. The Bantheville road is the jumping-off line. . . . It's No Man's Land."

The captain gave as near an imitation of a shrug as his position of attention permitted.

"Artillery that gets there any other way is going to have hard traveling," he said. "I have reconnoitered those woods and they are a jungle."

The general turned away from him to me.

"You have your orders, lieutenant," he said. "Get your platoon in position to-morrow night. Captain —— will furnish an officer and enough men to make a passage through the woods. Reconnoiter to-morrow and report to Col. Reeves, 353rd Infantry. That is all, gentlemen."

We filed out. The man who had spoken about the

roads introduced himself as a captain of the 314th Engineers. He was friendly and sympathetic.

"We'll make it somehow," he said. "But, boy, it's going to be the biggest job since the diggin' of the Panama Canal.

"Pick me up at P.C. Reeves when you go up to look things over to-morrow . . ." He went his way. I turned around to see Kent Hunter, a stranger since the days at Ornans, where we tried vainly to teach a French cook how to fry ham. Kent seemed quite cheerful and was interested in the news of my assignment.

"Hell, you may come through it all right," he said soothingly. "Maybe the Boche will think all your horses are dead and figure out that you're an ammunition dump or a road-building outfit."

Kent is on liaison for the 122nd. He didn't offer to trade jobs.

I went back to the battery. It was dark and everything was quiet. Jack Foran found me some supper. It consisted mostly of uncooked prunes and a handful of raisins.

Somehow it takes all the kick out of heroism when I think of being found dead with torn pants and a belly full of prunes. . . . The doomed man ate a hearty breakfast of ham and eggs. . . .

Don Stier will go up with me to-morrow to look over the terrain. In the meantime I am making this report as full as possible for the information of my probable heirs. I dare say it's a waste of time.

Perhaps a Last Entry

ROMAGNE-SOUS-MONTFAUCON, *October 31.*—Don Stier and I went out to-day and looked over the abattoir with Capt. Pike of the 314th Engineers. A

lively place. The Bantheville-Landres road is the deadline with Heinie's machine gun outposts on top of the slope north of it and the American infantry in the woods and along the ditch to the south.

We skirted the woods to the east and found a fire lane parallel to the highway and possibly half a kilometer back. The going is bad but practicable. We followed the lane all the way to the west side of the forest where the road curves up toward Remonville and decided that with the help of fifty engineers we might make it.

There was little going on in the woods. The line this morning was being held by a few machine guns and they were inactive. There are plenty of corpses in the vicinity but though they made their presence known one could not see them in the underbrush.

It is generally known along the line that the drive starts to-morrow morning. We saw a hint of how this news was being received as we started back to P.C. Reeves. We took cover at the sound of a rifle shot and then looked up to discover that one of the lads in the ditch by the road had shot himself in the foot. He was allowed to crawl out and look for help on his own account. None of his companions seemed to be interested in him. Poor devil! I felt a twinge of sympathy for him.

Col. Reeves looked skeptical when our proposed route was pointed out to him.

"A sensitive spot, gentlemen," he observed. "The Boche is very active there. Unless you can get through quietly there is certain to be trouble."

"It can be done without much noise," said Pike. "However, there are some spots where trees will have to be removed either by chopping or blasting. I think if we could go up there now with a detail and

set off a few grenades we could make a fair road out of it."

"What!" gasped the colonel. "Grenades! Along the Bantheville road! Out of the question."

Eventually he agreed that we might go as far as the northeast corner of the woods to-night and turn in when the noise of the American preparation should be sufficient to cover our advance. If the noise were loud enough, he admitted, it might prove feasible to blast the trees.

Don and I came back to the battery. We have selected the third and fourth sections for the slaughter with some eliminations for the good of the service.

Had a good supper. The prospects don't look so bad after all. Courage is largely a matter of diet.

Went in to see Wheeler. Gave him letters to Marie and Mater that are to be mailed if I don't come back.

Lieut. Mackie, a borrowed reconnaissance officer, was working on data for the rolling barrage. Sergeant Bill Cox sat figuring corrections. He looked up as I started to leave.

"Funny," he said. "Your wife is probably asleep now in a house with a roof on it and she hasn't any idea where you're going. Lieutenant, I'm afraid they're going to take your shirt." And then, all out of character, he suddenly jumped up and shoved out his hand.

Wheeler walked out of the dugout with me. The platoon was limbered up and starting out in column toward the path that leads down to the road. Some shelling over toward Cierges. The night was coming down cold. The captain stopped suddenly.

"Good-by, Bob," he said. And then he choked up and went back toward his P.C.

We move out in ten minutes or so. No hurry. We

have all night to get into the woods and we may be there a long time.

Forward the Light Brigade!

In Front of Remonville, *November 1.*—The fourth caisson got lost early in the evening. It turned off on the wrong road—a difficult performance for anyone but a caisson corporal. Frequent reports concerning it came up during the course of the night, but it wasn't seen again.

The platoon turned northward through a shell-torn road past a group of German barracks. As we left the highway Heinie dropped a shell behind the column. The game was on and devil take the hindmost.

The only possible course to the Bantheville road lay along the edge of the woods across three hills and as many muddy valleys. The column obliqued into an open field and caisson No. 3 promptly overturned in a shell hole. It took thirty minutes to get started again.

There was no excitement for perhaps another quarter of an hour. The circus jogged on slowly through the dark—engineers, cannoneers, carriages—dodging shell craters, pulling through clay sinks. The third piece, through one of those remarkable feats of driving exhibited only when least expected or desired, avoided a trail forty feet wide and lodged to the hubs in the muddy burrow of a 210. Another hour's delay.

Trouble was developing up ahead. So far there was no telling where the shells were landing but undoubtedly they were bound in our direction. Don Stier, who had been ahead with the engineers, came back to report mustard gas in the next hollow. I

took the report philosophically. It occurred to me that the gas might all be gone and the war over by the time we got the gun pried loose.

At this moment I detected the presence of Sergt. Glenn Murphy, the gas Non-Com., who had no business with the advance.

"What the hell are you doing here?" I inquired.

"I thought I could get by with it in the dark," he said. "I wanted to come along for the show and I can do more good here than back with the battery. Please, lieutenant, let me stay. . . ."

Let him stay! I could have cried on his shoulder. A volunteer of purest ray serene.

"Know what you're getting into?" I asked.

"Sure," he said. "I have no dependents . . ."

So he stayed. I don't know now what I'd have done without him. He turned loose on the shell hole excavators with all the zeal and vocabulary of an experienced Non-Com. and gave me a respite during which I tried to reassemble the column. It was so dark that the drivers couldn't see their horses' ears.

On the way once more. A heavy black cloud came across the sky, deepening the darkness. The chaos of shell holes underfoot was increasing.

A whiz-bang struck on the top of a hill perhaps a hundred meters away. Its coming was marked by a shower of sparks—then the diabolical crack of the explosion. A hail of fragments fell about the head of the column and I was surprised when a hasty inventory showed none missing. . . . The procession was plodding patiently along—all except the third caisson, which was stuck in the mud again.

Three sergeants, cursing volubly, joined in the attack on the unfortunate charioteers. A second

shell tore up the hilltop as the cannoneers put their shoulders to the wheel. This time the caisson got into motion again in considerably less than scheduled time.

The tat-tatting of a typewriter up ahead grew louder as each succeeding shell hole was crossed. We were drawing closer to the Front. Even in the darkness the outlines of the woods and the fringe of trees along the Bantheville road were developing from vagueness to silhouette like images on a photographic plate.

Murphy, who was walking along beside me, tilted his nose to the breeze and sniffed.

There was gas in the air—mustard and arsenic. But over all other odors was the pervasive stench of the battlefield . . . stronger than the cannoneers had ever found it before and therefore more distressing.

"They don't bury 'em deep around here," observed the sergeant.

I turned the column half right to avoid running over the huddled body of a dead German.

"They sure as hell don't," I admitted.

The first piece missed the corpse and hit a shell hole. That's what comes of observing the niceties of civilization.

. . . . . .

A halt was made at the top of the slope leading down into the last valley before the jumping-off place, and the command for absolute silence was passed along the line. A doughboy patrol passed up the hill and looked the column over carefully.

"There's a Dutch listening post up the hill just over the road," said one. "The least little noise an' they'll slap a barrage right on your old tail. Watch your step."

A clanking chain must have started the trouble.

The bottom of the hill was reached without mishap and I was just beginning to entertain hopes of getting to the screening woods when a magnesium flare burst suddenly—almost in our eyes. The entire column loomed up from the first piece to the last lagging column. Corpses and dead horses were scattered about it grotesquely.

A shell burst on the hill to the left—a G.I. can full of mustard. A whiz-bang cracked on the slope to the right. Two more whiz-bangs smashed with deafening violence immediately behind us. After that we lost count. . . .

For thirty minutes the valley seethed—a stinking replica of the Pit—while death stumbled around in a shroud of white vapor and hot iron rained out of a dismal sky.

It was obvious what was going on. The presence of the column in the valley was suspected rather than known. Without more accurate information the Boche could shoot only blindly. Once the lumbering guns cleared the crest Heinie, could lay his fire with data for the Bantheville road, adjust the deflection by means of flares and strew the countryside with wrecked artillery.

A little draw—so shallow that the contour maps of the sector do not show it—led off to the left. A detail cleared one dead horse and two dead Germans out of the way and the platoon turned in under the shelter of the little bank.

It was small enough protection—so slight a slope that the angle of fall for the range of the nearest 77 would permit sweeping it. But it was something. The command was given to unhitch and feed and the horses were tied to the carriage wheels.

A cold wind was coming through the valley—a wind rotten with smells of flesh and mustard. It was not entirely an ill wind because it dispersed the gas. But it made the prospect of a stay in the draw anything but pleasant.

I posted a guard to arouse the battery when the American bombardment should start and then grouped the other men in convenient shell holes.

The Boche did not permit the completion of the maneuver without protest. Another chain clanked. Another rocket barrage made the neighborhood look like Saturday night at a street carnival. And once more the lid came off the bottomless pit.

Whiz-bangs, 150s, 210s . . . batteries and regiments of them swept the Bantheville road, passed it, crept into the valley and up the opposite slope, so thickly at times that the noise of the bursts drowned out all the scream of approach. There was no lull in it. The zone was scorched first to the right—and up; then to the left and down, resurrecting the half buried dead, mixing noisome filth with the hurricane of iron.

The men of the column lay huddled under the bank, silent, motionless. They spoke only to whisper a gas alarm when the mustard became too strong to be bearable or to pass the order for the removal of masks when the breeze dispersed it. Some sought refuge under the caissons—a doubtful shelter. They reluctantly obeyed orders to get out.

Thus two hours—or two lifetimes—were passed.

Don and I, with one blanket and a poncho between us, dropped into a wet shell hole and tried to decide whether or not we'd be better off out in the open.

Don looked up at the sky.

"If it rains we'll never pull up that hill to the woods," he said—as always cheerful.

"I have a hunch that rain isn't going to have anything to do with it," was my happy suggestion. All was silent save for the racket of bursting shells.

"Say," said Don, "there's a horse tied to a caisson wheel just next to us. If he gets croppied he'll fall over on top of us. I'll match you to see who moves him."

I had to get out anyway. Some subdued but pointed conversation was going on toward the foot of the park. I led the horse to the last caisson and was tying him up when a shell got him.

The conversation, I discovered, was mostly on the part of Corporal Gillespie of the telephone squad. The missing fourth caisson, he had just discovered, had been carrying all the wire. Gillespie was about to tear the column apart when I reached him.

"We're going to need wire, Lieutenant," he said. "I'll go back after it."

The line of the barrage was marked at its long limit by a serpentine flame on the crest 200 meters south. I took a look at it and shook my head.

"No," I said. "I wouldn't ask any man to go through that . . . You couldn't get through, anyway. We'll be called on mostly for direct fire and we'll try to worry along without any phones."

I went back to the shell hole. Just as I was settling down in the mud I chanced to take another look at the hill to the south. A horse was clearing the crest at a gallop through the barrier of fire. A soldier was crouched low on the animal's neck. Gillespie had gone back after his wire. . . .

That's the trouble with this battery. No discipline in it.

. . . . . .

"Hitch and stand ready to move out."

The numb drivers and cannoneers arose stiffly and set about preparing the column to resume the march.

The American C.P.O. had started. One could hear the snapping of the 155 rifles and the pleasant song of shells outward bound. But so far the C.P.O. had had no appreciable effect on the enemy artillery. If such a thing were possible the rate of fire had increased.

The engineer lieutenant shook one of his men, who had failed to arise at the march order. It did not need a second look to determine that he would go no farther.

A shell splinter had taken him over the heart. He was dying—cold to the knees when we looked at him. He was dead before the first carriage was ready to move. . . . The shells were lighting closer.

A horse hitched to the first piece tumbled over and did not get up again. It was bleeding from two wounds. I shot it through the head.

I went around to the end of the column and had to shoot two more. It looked as if we probably would never get moving unless we dragged the guns by hand. As fast as we hitched the horses were going out.

The mustard was almost past all standing and a new difficulty appeared. The drivers, who had hit every shell hole from Romagne to the Bois de Bantheville with their eyes open, could hardly be expected to do any better blinded by gas masks and the first streak of dawn would show in ten minutes.

I took the only chance open. I ordered the men to wear only the nose clips and mouthpieces of the masks—which admittedly was not much of a concession to a gas like mustard when the concentration was sufficient to make one's eyes water. The chances

for getting killed were so good that the method did not seem to matter.

I went back to the head of the column. The German listening post could be ignored now. The American C.P.O. drowned every sound of harness and hoof.

"Prepare to mount! Mount." The command was howled back along the column by drivers glad enough to get their respirator tubes out of their mouths long enough to repeat it.

"For'd! March!" The six horses of the leading piece stepped into trace and the platoon moved forward.

A mustard shell hit the last caisson just as the column turned up the hill. It killed three horses, wrecked the carriage and eliminated the section. God knows what happened to the drivers.

The grace of God was with the guns on the pull up the last slope. The barrage played from one end of the long line to the other like a stream from a hose, but somehow the spray seemed always to fall short or over.

The sky was blazing with flares. The column as it cleared the crest became a silhouetted target.

A machine gun opened up from the hill across the road to the north. The bullets snapped overhead like whip cracks and frightened the crazy horses. They spatted into the ground at our feet.

Don, who had been reconnoitering a few feet in advance came hurrying back.

"Our path is gone," he reported. "A 210 lit in it and it's full of trees and holes."

The engineer Captain stopped short. From his point of view the charge of the light brigade was finished.

"We may be able to clear a way," he said dubiously. But I looked at the shell bursts to the right of us and I saw the hole in that plan. We couldn't last here for five minutes. In the language of the F.A.D.R. any decision is better than none—and No Man's Land could not possibly be any worse than the line. I signaled the drivers and we hit the bank up on to the stone road.

I don't suppose there was ever a stranger procession through No Man's Land.

The shells of the Boche were lighting with beautiful precision in the middle of the road, and it's a poor fuse that won't explode when dropped on concrete.

Parachute flares—a thousand of them—floated over us and made the road as bright as Broadway.

A machine gun from the American side stuttered hesitatingly—an eloquent message of the gunner's surprise. Then in that quarter came decision. Unidentified artillery had no business on the road. True the 89th Division might have heard something about us but we were now passing in front of the 90th and nobody had thought it necessary to take the 90th into confidence. When the gun opened up again there was no hesitancy. A driver dived over his horse into the road and stayed there. A cannoneer flopped over into the ditch.

The crackling spread along the entire front of the woods. The German machine gun outposts answered. Overhead traveled bullets that cracked and snapped and others that swished with the frou-frou of a silk skirt. Trench mortar projectiles made a whispering passage and smashed in the bank.

We had to take it at a walk. We did not dare risk a gallop and the possible overturning of a gun.

Even at a crawl it was a terrible task to keep the horses up in the collar. We lost a man now and then. Occasionally a bullet rang against a caisson with a sound like the bull's-eye in a shooting gallery. But the column seemed hypnotized. The double barrage seemed almost unnoticed as the men howled to the horses:

"Allez! Allez! Jobah! Ghee! Ghee! Allez vite! Giddap you skates!"

Then, after a time longer than it took to carve the Sphinx, the head of the platoon came to a place where the fire lane cut out to the road from the woods. We turned in.

The first piece had penetrated the woods about a hundred meters when the driver of the lead team slumped down into his saddle and fell with a bullet through his lungs. Blood streaming over the horse's back showed that he must have been wounded early in the wild ride. He slid off into the mud.

Hun artillery was playing on the stone road just west of where we left it—a nauseating barrage of 210s and 150s. For the present Heinie had been outguessed.

Daylight was coming. The lifting shadows showed long lines of waiting infantry . . . batteries of machine guns preparing for the barrage that would start the attack. They had ceased shooting at us. The Cho-cho gunners seemed scarcely able to credit their eyes at the sight of us.

As we made the turn west on the fire lane the golden rockets went up from the brush ahead of us. . . . A glory of shining light above the trees. Zero hour!

Don clutched my arm and shouted to make himself heard over the reverberations of a 210.

"My God," he exclaimed. "Did you ever see such beautiful fireworks?"

I had always had a deep affection for Donald. I don't think I ever really appreciated him till that moment. Win, lose or draw, if Don lives a hundred years or dies to-night his mother can have the consolation of knowing that she gave the world a gentle boy who did a man's job like a man.

A second 210 dropped about ten meters from the second piece and Corporal Wallace was out for keeps. A fragment had hit him in the guts.

Two more horses were dead.

The drivers were tearing at the mess to disentangle the harness.

We had barely cleared the road when we were forced to halt by a shell hole. Capt. Pike called for the engineers. They had evaporated. Out of fifty, three of them remained. He took the remnant forward to cut a trail.

A whistle blew. The doughboys came down the gentle slope through the woods for the jump-off. They seemed to be asleep. They plodded slowly forward—colliding head on with caissons and horses. Sergt. Ammons swore at them and told them to look out how they held their bayonets.

A heavy shell struck between the first piece and the engineers and caved in a machine gun nest. The gunners burrowed out, dirty and shocked but unhurt.

Moving again. Pike had found a way around the obstruction through the brush.

A new zone fire—mostly naval guns—came into the woods from the northwest. The din of other noises kept one from hearing the approach of the shells.

Whenever a 210 struck it burrowed into the soft mud, lifted the landscape and dropped it again, knocking everybody flat within a radius of 200 meters and leaving an echo, terrible, persistent, that numbed the ears. For minutes after tumbling branches testified to the ruin it had wrought.

A bit farther forward. Machine guns were shooting across the trail . . . shooting through blanket screens that shielded us from the eyes of the operators who probably wouldn't have given a damn for us, anyway. The division apparently had given us no thought after ordering us forward.

Don started to look for an officer who would halt the fire and give us permission to pass. But Sergt. Murphy found a quicker method. He kicked down a blanket and ran forward in front of the nearest pit with his hands in the air. The gunners swore at him and ceased firing.

The process was repeated at each succeeding nest and we went forward.

Sergt. Ammons came up to report three more horses dead. As he started back a blast got him and two other men.

I looked at the situation, wondering what the hell was going to come of it. Once past the machine guns the platoon should clear the rest of the woods in a couple of minutes. Fifteen minutes' delay in transit, I figured, would fix it so that there would be neither horses nor men for the advance.

One of the machine guns was silenced as I looked at it.

A G.I. can probably over thirty centimeters, an over from the road, made a direct hit on the fox hole—a few bits of O.D.—some unidentifiable but

nauseating débris . . . That gun was out of action. We went on to the next one.

Don came rushing forward with an infantry officer who saved Sergt. Murphy the thrill of further questing for suicide. It was daylight now. And the fire that had been horrible all night was doubly horrible now that we could see it. We should have barely time to get to our jump-off point in time to join the second wave.

We could see ahead of us the geysers of black smoke where the G.I. cans hit—the white clouds of gas.

The platoon wound slowly past the last machine gun nest, caving one in in transit, then had to halt for the last charted shell hole. Pike and his two or three helpers went to work with their axes.

I looked around to find Gillespie at my elbow. He had escaped the barrage—twice—salvaged his wire and returned. I couldn't find time to threaten him with court-martial for disobeying orders. He looked up smiling and pointed to the engineers.

"They don't . . ." he began.

A 210 hit at our feet. Gillespie's smile died. He looked at his fingers. They seemed to be hanging in shreds from the bloody pulp of his outstretched hand. Two dark spots showed on his blouse. He sank down against a tree.

Perry Modrow of the medical corps came out of the jam to look at him.

"He's gone, lieutenant," he said. "Pieces of overcoat, leather jerkin and blouse and rotten underwear all through him. . . . Chunk of shell as big as my fist hit him on one side and went out the other."

We picked George up and laid him in a fresh mustard shell hole out of the way of the column and moved on.

The way led through a natural arbor—over a lighted pathway under arching trees. On either side lay wounded machine gunners, waiting for transportation to the rear.

One, a lieutenant, was beyond aid—belly wound. His face lighted as we came up.

"Go get 'em," he counseled and then he sank back into a stupor, staring blankly ahead of him.

Ahead, in the open space beyond the forest, the lines of the infantry second wave on its way forward could be seen plainly.

We passed out of the jungle, down a little hill and fell in behind them.

We turned right and struck out up the slope toward Remonville. The first line was then passing over the top of the crest to the north. Already the prisoners were streaming back—frightened sheep, unguarded, contemned, alone.

We were still mobile—but not much more. As we started up the hill we had four horses to the carriage instead of six. Three of our caissons were missing. Our engineer escort—all but Pike—and a sergeant and two or three men—had checked out. About half our men were lying back there in the woods.

One of the horses in the lead team of the first piece was bleeding from six wounds. He had lost an eye, the remnants of which hung in an oystery mass over his nose. I felt like shooting him but he was still pulling and we needed his help.

Halfway up the hill we ran into an outfit of one-pounders. They were huddled against the slope.

"Did you come through the woods?" the captain asked incredulously. I told him we had.

"Well, I'll be damned," he declared. "We were in there but it was too hot so we came up here."'

I could have laughed outright at this exquisite jest. Too hot for one-pounders but O.K. for 75s. This outfit could lie doggo in defilade while we pushed forward to blast machine gun nests . . . the work they were designed to do. . . . The same old army and the same old G.H.Q.

Dawn had come up like thunder. The light had struggled briefly to penetrate the pall of battle and then had given up the effort. A cold white mist, choking with mustard, rolled northward with the wind.

New shell craters added wisps of smoke to the noisome vapors. The sun hung like a red lantern over the woods. Ahead the entire panorama of battle was spread in the dim light—a line of infantry, slowly advancing in extended order.

The line of the barrage was just ahead of them—plainly marked by churning earth, smoke puffs whiter than the morning mists, and the drums of melanite rolling and echoing.

The flat top of the hill was an abattoir. The barrage had fallen squarely upon three lines of machine gun trenches running east and west. A headless body lay in the road. The trenches were filled with a hash of blood and entrails that looked like the offal of a packing plant. There were no wounded men—few corpses that one could identify as such. Probably not a man in this part of the rear guard action was alive five minutes after the start of the advance.

On the other side of the barrage line the Germans were falling back. Their machine gun nests, hard to distinguish from the other depressions in the valley, gave protection to an audacious withdrawal. A

column of squads was disappearing along the road above Remonville.

A heavy burst at the tail end of their column. Smoke blotted out all observation of effect.

Prisoners continued to stream back through the lines—their hands in the air.

One young lieutenant stopped to look at us and rubbed his eyes. He noticed then that I was an officer and saluted.

"Artillery here!" he said in English. "It is so hard to believe. I congratulate you on your men."

He stopped to look where the shells were tearing apart the column of feldgrau beyond the spire of Remonville.

"Excellent shooting," he said in a manner entirely detached. "Your guns are marvelously accurate."

"Your artillery is pretty good," I admitted. "We have just come through your barrage."

"You could never have come through your own," he replied. "I, too, am an artilleryman. . . . The war will soon be over, *Gott sei dank!*"

He saluted gravely and followed his countrymen down the hill.

No markers had been placed for us but we found the infantry colonel crouched with his adjutant in the shelter of a bank along the road. He looked as if he had suddenly received a visit from smallpox.

"Keep moving," he ordered. "Don't stop here. You'll attract fire."

"What targets do you want us to shoot at?" I asked him.

"None," he declared. "There's a patch of woods two kilometers ahead. Get cover on the south edge of that and keep out of sight. You'll attract fire. . . ."

Once more I could have laughed, but the man was a colonel. We had sacrificed most of the best men in A battery to say nothing of some thirty horses for the privilege of being ordered off the road. Gerry was in a column of squads squarely under our sights not three kilometers away. But we weren't to be allowed to shoot at him. We might attract fire. . . .

And here we are. The great adventure is a dud.

. . . . . .

About 5 o'clock Captain Wheeler came up with the remainder of the battery. There were tears in his eyes when he saw us.

There was hardly enough of the battery left to talk about. A barrage fell on the Romagne road just as the column was pulling out and most of it is there yet.

We joined up with him and moved to a position just out of Remonville, where we are now. Shells are still socking into the crests fore and aft of us, but the joke is on Gerry. There's hardly enough of a target left to waste a shell on.

Meuse

The Final Phase

Return to Action

Remonville, *November 2.*—We were all up most of the night trying to piece out the battery. Guns were laid, ammunition was unloaded and details were sent back to pick up some of our echelons. The battery echelon is somewhere back on the Bantheville road. The advance platoon's echelon is in a grove on the Remonville road.

Some replacements came up during the night and were assigned to fill out the depleted gun crews.

Fired a barrage at 5:30 A.M. It was a pretty thin affair. No ammunition. We miss the three caissons that I lost on the way up here.

At 10 A.M. we fired another. Our battalion is now out of shells.

Noon.—Two truckloads of ammunition just came up. Col. Rogers has ordered our limbers to a point a few hundred meters behind the guns. A new advance is in order.

It is raining a little. I am cold and wet and sick. Apparently I have no monopoly on that.

Toward the River

Barricourt, *November 3.*—At 2:30 this morning the battery pulled out. I had been asleep about an hour when the order came. Wheeler left me to gather up our scattered transport and to salvage a couple of caissons if I could.

It rained most of the night. The road is like the highway out of Avocourt.

We got assembled and ready to pull out about noon. The weather was murky and cold, the air acrid with burned powder and mustard. The German artillery had not been completely silenced. The whiz-bangs and 77s had ceased to smash on the road but shells of calibers ranging from 130 to 210 lumbered over to burst dully on the slopes behind.

We felt fairly safe in our advance. Liaison officers had brought back word that the chief aviation field of the sector, somewhere near Barricourt, had been abandoned. No German aëroplanes came over.

Infantry was still passing up, a battalion at a time, in single file.

I still had the two guns I had brought forward. Wheeler had been unable to find horses to pull them. The skates I finally got into the traces seemed to be ready to die at any moment.

While we stood waiting for a chance to get into the road two or three trucks filled with women came back from the Front—harlots probably. Most of them were dressed in German uniforms. They looked like a pretty good argument for virtue.

Near Remonville we came upon another woman—dead. She lay halfway out of a machine gun pit, her hair fanned out in the mud, her breast exposed. I suppose that such women as she gave rise to the legend of the Amazon army behind the Boche guns . . . poor prostitutes caught as this one had been caught by an unexpected barrage.

We were halted by the traffic jam and I detailed two men to wrap her in a blanket and bury her.

. . . . . .

Our first orders were to proceed to Andevanne but

we learned that Capt. Wheeler had been sidetracked.

A liaison sergeant met us on the road and gave us new orders to strike up the hill out of Remonville on the road to Barricourt.

"There was a hot rear-guard action up forward," the sergeant reported. "Lieut. Mercer located positions for the batteries and then found out that the infantry hadn't caught up with him. He was only a few yards behind the outposts."

So we went on through Remonville.

The town was under shell fire but the German batteries seemed to be firing by the time clock method —a bombardment every fifteen minutes and five minutes of firing at a time. We got through without the loss of a man merely by moving when we knew Heinie wasn't going to shoot.

The hill out of Remonville was long and steep—a bad route even with the roads in good condition and the interdiction fire had ruined the roads. As we pulled clear of the town we got word that the infantry had taken Barricourt and was fighting for the hills about Tailly. The line of battle, apparently, was veering from east and west to north and south and Gerry was being driven back toward the Meuse.

Every variety of army transport was having difficulties with the grade. Engineer squads were scraping the slime from the surface of the highway, seemingly an endless task. The mules on a doughboy kitchen took advantage of such assistance as gravity afforded them and balked. A colonel in a Cadillac came up the hill and immediately became entangled in the mixture of mules and cookery. He swore at the drivers and vainly sought to straighten out the sliding mess. Then one of the doughboys solved the

problem by overturning the kitchen in the ditch.

We advanced only a few feet at a time. The horses could not keep their feet and had no ambition. By the time the first piece was halted at the edge of the thick woods on the crest, the column was strung out for a kilometer and interspersed with quads, fourgons and ambulances.

Immediately ahead of me on the final grade was a ration wagon. Tied to the rear axle was a fuzzy German dog which seemed to be proceeding with the same willingness that might have been expected in a captive tied to the wheels of a Roman conqueror's chariot. At every halt the animal straightened his neck in his tight collar and howled a protest against life as he was being forced to lead it. The last straw came as the kitchen train branched off the road into the woods. Eight or ten horses had been hitched to the fourgon to negotiate the ditch. At a signal they plunged forward, knee-deep in water and slime, without consulting the wishes of the pup behind. He saw the water and howled piteously. He reached the brink slightly in advance of the axle to which he was tied and halted. He sat down to think about his prospects but was not given much time to deliberate. A pull on the rope cut his howling short and dragged him into the advance. The mud closed over him, then bubbled as he emerged on the opposite bank. But there was no more yipping. With true resignation he accepted the inevitable.

I sympathized with the dog. I knew he must feel as I felt.

Eventually we got to the top. We parked half our carriages midway up the slope and hitched ten horses apiece to the other half—then returned the teams for those that had been left.

It was gathering dusk when we came to the crest. We parked for nearly an hour to rest the horses. Alongside us was another battery—parked forever. An outfit of 77s it had been. The guns had been limbered and the drivers in the saddle when the end came. A heavy had crashed into the column and twenty-four horses and as many men were laid out in pieces where they had fallen.

Sergt. Murphy rode forward to get in touch with the battery. In the dark we stepped out again toward Barricourt. On the south end of the town Murphy came back with word that we were to pull off the road and camp until daylight. Wheeler was not sanguine that our alleged horses could negotiate the long hill to the northeast.

There was a house near by that promised shelter. Several of the cannoneers went into it. All came out hurriedly. The place was a morgue. It had possibly a hundred bunks in it . . . a corpse in every bunk.

On Liaison

Beauclair, *November 4.*—It is rumored that an order has gone through making me a captain—that I have been a captain since some time last month. Heaven be praised, what of it?

We got back with the battery this morning and I had a very decent breakfast. I was all set for a long rest when Capt. Wheeler got a telephone call from regimental headquarters.

"You are ordered to report to Col. Rogers," he said. "Somebody has found your qualification card.

"It seems that all the birds who knew anything about communications have been knocked off. You're to be regimental reconnaissance officer or some such damned thing."

I gulped and argued with my faltering legs to move me over the hill to Tailly.

The colonel was almost apologetic about hauling me out of the battery. He said that he had to have some technical man to take nominal charge of the communications but that the bulk of my work would be as regimental reconnaissance officer with him. Fair enough!

We started out at once over hill, over dale and through woods for Beauclair.

As we neared the town I knew that we had once more caught up with the war. Aëroplanes were diving about overhead. Machine guns were snapping up in front. There was a racket of cannonading in the woods toward where the map showed the river to be.

The town was deserted. . . . Not a man in the streets. We crept in like burglars.

The colonel was in the lead—hugging the walls of the houses along the right of the street. Suddenly he darted through an open doorway. I followed him in and down a stairs into an old wine cellar. A big man whom I later discovered to be Col. Benard of the 355th infantry was fighting a telephone.

"Hello," he was calling. "This is Idol. Give me Ideal or the Chief of Staff." He repeated the ritual over and over and I vaguely remembered what I had heard of code words designating units and commanders. Apparently the Capital I had been given to this division.

"We're being held up by machine guns in the woods this side of Laneuville," he said. "I'd order an advance now if brigade would let me. Our line is right at the edge of the woods here . . ." He pointed it out on the map. "It would be suicide to go into the

woods without artillery preparation. Why can't I get a barrage?"

"Did you ask for one?" inquired Rogers.

"Hell, yes," protested Benard. "I asked for it an hour ago."

Col. Rogers called me over and briefly sketched the situation. He ordered me back to Tailly to report to the adjutant Capt. Lord and to find out why the barrage had not been delivered.

I made the weary journey to Tailly—by the road this time, for my legs were tottering—and I delivered my message. I learned that the infantry runners had gone astray. No request for fire had been received. So I described Col. Benard's problem, routed out the telephone detail and ordered a line laid to Beauclair. The linemen started out of town right behind me.

When I got back to the old wine cellar I told the colonel that the guns were laid to fire when directed and that full directions could be given over the phone as soon as the wire arrived—which would be in about fifteen minutes.

Just at that moment a doughboy lieutenant came in. He was laughing hysterically and apparently didn't know whether he was afoot or on horseback.

"I lost my outfit," he explained. Col. Benard looked as if he was about to order somebody to throw the man out.

"I lost my outfit and I thought they had gone into the woods. So I went in after them."

Col. Benard turned away from his telephone and listened. Apparently there was to be more to this story.

"I went into the woods," giggled the lieutenant. "And I walked right ahead till I came to the river

and a German ran into me and shot a pistol at me and I shot back at him and I missed him."

"A German!" repeated Benard. "One German!"

"Yes," said the lieutenant. "One German—only one German. I went all through the woods trying to find my way back—they've all gone."

Benard was back at his telephone again calling for the chief of staff. He nearly died of apoplexy before the connection was repeated and he was gasping for breath before he had made a report of the lieutenant's story. Then suddenly he hung up the dumb-bell and picked up a message book.

"Runners," he called. "Take this order to all units: "Attack at 15:30 o'clock. Take Laneuville at all costs."

Col. Rogers went out with Col. Benard. From the end of the town we could see the infantry rising up out of the fox holes at the edge of the woods. A typewriter barrage was accompanying them.

The two colonels moved forward with the second wave. I stayed behind to locate positions for two battalions of artillery. I put up markers along such hedges as I could find northeast of town, then returned to P.C. Benard. The wire had come up in the meantime and I relayed the colonel's orders to Capt. Lord.

. . . . . .

The batteries are on their way up now.

Reports from the Front are that the infantry has gone through the woods and is fighting in the streets of Laneuville. There probably will be a big scrap for the crossing of the Meuse to Stenay in the morning.

Ultimate Tragedy of Battery A

The Woods before Laneuville, *November 5.*—It was murky this morning. . . . But nobody minded that much. Rain would be a godsend in this place. The batteries lack quite a bit in the way of cover and aëroplanes are overhead, unseen in the clouds.

Went out shortly after dawn to have a look at the batteries.

The fight for Stenay had started. Civilians were coming back along the road from the river with their household goods on their backs. Most of them were old men and women who wanted to fall on our necks.

Up near F battery's position a young German lay dead in the ditch—a nice looking blond lad he had been. He was stretched out on his back.

As I came out of Tomlin's P.C. an old woman was passing. She stopped to rest and to convey to me the glad tidings that after four years she was free again. She chattered hysterically in French so rapid that I could follow only about half of it. Then she walked over to the dead German and spat in his face.

"Boche Kaput!" she said. Then smilingly she staggered back along the road toward Beauclair.

There were few shells coming over. Now and then one hit in the town and knocked some tiles off the roof. But after Romagne the bombardment seemed nothing at all to worry about. Then, as I was starting across the field to the south of the road toward A battery, two shells broke in front of me. In a moment men were shouting for first aid and litter bearers started to come across the field.

Only two shells and most of the firing battery had been wiped out.

As the litters approached the road an aëroplane

swooped down and a bomb broke. Sergt. Ruckel, at the front end of one of the stretchers, went down. When he got up again he was holding his arm. Before I got to him Lieut. Duffy was cutting open his blouse.

Ruckel was on the verge of tears when I got to him.

"They want to send me back," he told me. "All I got is a fragment through the arm and they want to take me away from my section."

I told him he had better not argue about it.

"If you're all right you'll be back with the battery in a couple of days," I said. "But this soil around here is rotten with gangrene. You can't take chances with it."

The man he had been carrying was dead. They dumped him out of the litter beside the dead German.

Col. Rogers and I started out through the woods about noon to reconnoiter the infantry lines and establish liaison with Col. Benard.

From the crest above Beauclair we could look down into Laneuville. The town was catching all the hell that had been left over from Romagne. Through the glasses we could see the streets swirling with the dust of smashed buildings and out on the edge toward the river the rising plumes of bursting H.E.

Col. Rogers was sick and weak—scarcely able to walk. That made a pair of us. But we plowed through the woods and eventually found the infantry colonel wrapped in a blanket in a hollow to the left of the sector.

The two colonels agreed that the batteries should be moved up to the edge of the crest looking down on Laneuville. From that point they could fire on to the heights of the Meuse on the right bank and

they would have some defilade from enemy fire.

I was sent back to deliver the order. On the way I got a look at the back road through the woods. It was an unbelievable bog. Heinie had attempted to take out a battery of 77s. All of the guns and most of the horses were still there. The horses had gone barrel deep in the mud and, unable to extricate themselves, had died there.

Reached Beauclair at dusk. In an hour the regiment was on the road. In two hours I had assembled a telephone detail to start back to P.C. Benard and possibly to run a line south to the new battery positions.

Just as I was getting ready to start new orders came in from brigade. Capt. Lord was white when he turned away from the phone.

"Orders to move through Laneuville along the Beaumont road," he said. I could hardly believe my ears.

"There must be a mistake," I suggested. "The road is ahead of the infantry line and the heavies are dumping into Laneuville five shots a minute."

Lord put through a call to brigade and delivered the news. There had been no mistake. Divisional H.Q. had issued the order and that was all there would be to it.

Majors White and Rearden were in the room when the report was verified. White shrugged and adjusted the map in his map case.

"Well," he said, "that's that. Let's go." He and Capt. Netcott, his adjutant, walked out and got aboard their horses.

A gas barrage was cracking into the woods when I got to it on my way back to P.C. Benard. Gerry

had set fire to two or three signal dumps along the river and the sky was colored by red and green flames for miles.

Gunfire by Thumb Rule

Beauclair, *November 6.*—Col. Rogers was running a fever when we reached P.C. Benard about midnight. He could hardly believe me when I told him what had happened. Neither of us thought there'd be enough of the regiment left to require our services after a trip through Laneuville, but obviously there was nothing to be done about it.

When daylight came—after a wet cold night during which we slept in the bog without blankets—we started back to Beauclair. I virtually had to carry the colonel part of the way. He had been most of a week without sleep and his heart was beginning to quit.

At Beauclair we learned that while one shell may eliminate a complete firing battery a brigade concentration frequently does no harm. The regiment had got through Laneuville with negligible losses—fewer losses in fact than the advance platoon had suffered in the fiasco of November 1.

Leiut. Selman of the medical corps wished to evacuate the colonel and got cursed for his solicitude. He ended up by administering a syringe full of strychnine.

The 11th F.A. was coming by at the time. The colonel of the 11th came in and offered his services. Col. Rogers accepted them for a day and lay down on the floor to sleep. I went forward to reconnoiter the Beaumont-Laneuville road and pick out a possible post of command. The circus was scattered all over the landscape by now. The batteries were up

on the river fifteen or more kilos away. Brigade P.C. was another fifteen to the rear. Maintenance of a telephone line looked like a swell job.

Found the batteries in their new home chiefly engaged in dodging shells. The bulk of the infantry had dropped back of the road into the woods. Machine gun posts held the river and the regiment for the most part was out in front of the line where it could take all the overs from interdiction fire and its share of zone operations in the woods.

Glasses showed the roads across the Meuse filled with vehicles moving out of Pouilly, Inor and Stenay. The G.I. cans were still cracking down on Laneuville.

I got through my work quickly. An old German prison camp seemed to offer some shelter as a P.C.—there was nothing else except possibly a pup tent in the open. A hill behind the kitchens of the camp promised some protection, though not much. I left an orderly there to hold the location and started back on the Laneuville road.

It was a rotten day and a rotten walk. Every time I showed my head out of the woods a battery across the Meuse would snipe at me, and in the woods the goo was so deep I could hardly find a footing.

About halfway to Laneuville I found some help. An infantry flivver that had come in during the night was about to make a run back to a dump in Tailly for supplies. A lieutenant who apparently did not realize what he was getting in for was driving. I hopped in alongside him.

The 77s took pot shots at us along the road but did not seem to be putting any heart into it. Probably the battery commanders thought that we'd be getting ours when we rode into Laneuville. They weren't far wrong.

A 210 crashed on the church steeple as we passed under it. A ton of tile missed us by a whisper. Three shells dug manholes in the pavement ahead of us. The looie suddenly jammed on the brakes, leaped out of his seat and disappeared down the steps into a wine cellar. I got out and lay down with my head over the steps.

"What are you going to do there?" I asked.

"Stay till this firing quits," he said.

"You'll have a building on top of you in another hour and the firing isn't going to quit."

"It's a chance, anyway. Out there on the road we'd be killed sure."

Somehow I convinced him that the heavies weren't going to stop bombarding the town. There was still a contest for the bridge head and Heinie was making the most of his opportunities. Eventually he crawled out, cranked up the flivver and we started out again.

Just outside the town the snipers saw us and opened up. Four shells dropped about a hundred meters ahead of us . . . two to the right of the road, two to the left. . . . One battery working. Deflection and range correct. The looie started to put on more gas. I yelled at him to stop.

"The Krauts shoot the same book we do," I said. "They'll shoot again at that range." They did. The looie looked at me as if he expected me to take some rabbits out of a plug hat.

"Now what are they going to do?" he inquired.

"They'll shoot for the short range of their bracket," I told him. "If you refuse to run into the fire for them they'll have to find out where they are. Step on it." He stepped. The guess was right. Heinie came back two hundred meters and missed us by about fifty. All four shells were in the mud with the

salvo straddling the road—for which thank God. We went along about another 200 meters.

"It's my guess he'll come up four hundred in the belief that we've run out of the bracket," I diagnosed. "Stop here." The next four shells were about 100 meters ahead of us and we made another short dash. The problem was getting critical.

"If I were firing this problem," I figured, "I'd take another try at the long range and presume a bracket. Heinie knows by this time that we're not standing still. So we halted again and the battery crashed a salvo another fifty meters ahead of us.

"What ought he do next?" inquired the looie.

"If he had any sense he'd know we are trying to get up the hill and he'd start to plaster the crest," I diagnosed. "But I believe if we stay here for another salvo we can make him look for the short end of the bracket again." We stayed. He fired. His range was so nearly correct that mud spattered the sides of the flivver and a chunk of iron went through the top. We lit out again and Heinie, still looking at his red book, wasted another salvo trying to find out what had become of the bracket.

We reached the crest squarely abreast of his fourth salvo all of which lit in the mud and slightly to our left. Before he could load again we were over the hill and into the trees.

The day was cold and raw but both of us were sweating when we pulled into Beauclair.

There are some compensations even in a bad break such as the one we've had since we came to Beauclair. To-night Col. Benard called up to complain of the shelling of Laneuville and to ask that something be done about it. Col. Rogers pointed out that the

regiment had been moved completely out of the sector occupied by the 355th Infantry which it was supposed to be supporting and this on direct orders of Division headquarters without his knowledge. If Division were running the 124th F.A., he suggested, then maybe Division could arrange some plan for the artillery to cover targets in dead space.

The old man—he isn't so doggoned old at that—has been in the army since his first shave and nobody is going to tell him where he fits. Another shot of strychnine and he'll be informing the world what he thinks of G.H.Q. and advance platoons and Divisional interference. . . . And that's a plenty.

Just learned to-day that Steve Lewis is dead. He was up near Bantheville the night of the advance and a whiz-bang got him. They found the croix de guerre, medaille militaire and a British decoration pinned to his undershirt. It turns out he was in the ambulance service before we got into the jam. Nobody in this outfit knew he had been decorated until he was dead.

The square shooters continue to get theirs.

The Last Shot

The Amateurs

Gaudron Ferme, on the Meuse, *November 7.*—Set out to-day to lay a telephone line from Beauclair to the edge of nowhere supposed to be our sector. About ten lads with rifles newly arrived as replacements were waiting for me. I salvaged the rifles, showed them how to make a Western Union joint and started out.

A 77 hit near the road as we approached the woods. I flopped with great skill and accuracy and arose to continue the work. I discovered that most of my brave lads had gone over the hill. With a couple of the old detail we got the line in as far as the southeast corner of the woods overlooking Laneuville where we hooked into some wire already laid. Everything tested O.K. and we went back.

At our old headquarters I found most of my vanished helpers standing at the door.

I lined them all up and gave them a doing off for cowardice and desertion in the face of the enemy. I was hot enough about it to do a good job. But right at my peroration one frightened boy stepped out of ranks and held up his hand.

"Sir," he said, "we didn't know we were at the Front till that shell hit. It was the first one we ever heard. I don't know about the rest of these fellows but just eleven days ago I was put into a uniform in New York for the first time . . ."

I checked up on it and found he was telling the truth. Eleven days off the old home doorstep and somebody had dumped this mob right down into the middle of a battle without bothering to mention what was going on.

Regimental headquarters moved up to the old prison camp to-day. Colonel Rogers doesn't like it very well, but he can see with half an eye that there's nothing else around here except a sawmill now in use as a field hospital farther down the road.

Gaudron Ferme, *November 8.*—Saw most of the Meuse valley to-day wandering around the hill with the colonel. The batteries are beginning to work on the roads across the river. Artillery fire from the opposite heights has lessened in intensity.

The Same, *November 9.*—Gen. Hall in command of the infantry brigade that we are supporting has moved into our prison camp. He has taken over a nifty bungalow formerly occupied by the prison commandant.

There is quite a lot of engineering activity on the road. We hear that the infantry is going to cross the river to-morrow or next day on pontoons below Pouilly. The heavies are still searching us out and the 77s and 88s are making a hash out of the terrain around our headquarters.

A couple of batteries of the 11th F.A. have moved in alongside us. The road is still pretty hot and the bulk of the infantry remains in the woods.

Exit Tomlin

Gaudron Ferme, *November 10.*—The crossing is to be early to-morrow morning.

Col. Rogers has been ordered to report back to Maj. Gen. Winn at Beaufort to get full information concerning what we are to do after the crossing.

The 122nd is to trade batteries with us as a tactical group, probably with Lieut. Col. Schwengle commanding the unit on the left. I reported to Col. Foreman and was ordered to put in a line to an observation post above Pouilly.

I'll bet I have walked a thousand miles in the last five days. I wonder how many of these miles my boots covered when they were on the feet of my departed benefactor. My legs are sore. The dysentery continues and the food is not so regular nor so good.

I pushed on from the 122nd headquarters to the mill on the Beaumont road and then up the hill along the river. I came as close to being croppied as I'll ever be before the coroner's inquest. No malice in it. Heinie just tossed away a 77 and I was in the way of it. The shell bored into the bank about three feet from my head and an outcoming fragment jolted my tin hat down over my eyes.

Getting too familiar with these damned shells. The old reflex action that used to flop me at the first screech seems to be missing on a couple of cylinders. I dare say that it will be functioning perfectly for the next few days at least.

With Corporal Neff I bored into the jungle on top of the hill to a point behind a hedge overlooking the remains of the Pouilly bridge. Shells—our shells—were tearing up the town. There was no sign of life in the streets. Some corpses and dead horses were picked up by the glasses in the ruins around the north end of the old bridge. There was a barely distinguishable movement in the open spaces among the

trees where the road leads northeastward over the heights and away from the river.

I showed Neff where we could lay our line to bring it up to this point from the present location of the batteries and crawled down the hill again—mostly on my belly—to get the detail forward with the wire.

At regimental I got a telephone call from the 122nd. I was ordered to put off my wire-stringing until morning, inasmuch as some change in plan was likely. Fair enough. I had been wondering how I was going to drag my wavering legs up through the brush again. Now, maybe, I could get some sleep.

It was dark by the time I got back to the road. I walked along toward Laneuville and watched the batteries getting ready for action. Trucks were beginning to come in from the south and the ditches were filling up as always with tons of ammunition that presently would have to be redistributed.

Gun crews were sinking trail holes for maximum elevation and I felt as lonely as if I had been kicked out of the army. All of this was the job I'd been doing since Mont Sec—and now somebody else was doing it quite as well as if I had never existed.

I meandered down to Battery A's kitchen and mooched a meal from Jack Foran. A was shifting trail to get clear of the trees. Doughboys were coming up to the road in single file.

Engineers were passing, trundling boats on wheels to the north. Stopped in to pass the time of day with Wheeler and Stier. Felt the sweet lassitude of "home again" even though Heinie's zone fire on the woods was picking up.

Wheeler got a telephone message while I was there.

Tomlin has just been knocked off—no telling yet whether it's permanent or not. A fragment got him

through both legs. He was hauled out to an ambulance and started back through Laneuville but a second shell overturned the ambulance. The thing is a wreck and Tomlin is somewhere inside it.

I positively feel an ache in writing this. Poor old Tommy. After trying all his life to get into a war he makes the grade and lasts ten days. . . .

There is a Destiny that shapes our ends rough—hew them how we may.

I felt like sticking around with A battery. It just seemed that I ought not to be anywhere else. But Rogers may be coming back and some one else may be looking for wire somewhere. Anyway my old battery seems to be pretty well eliminated. Most of the boys around the guns are just getting into their first battle with a firing unit. I know them, of course, but not so intimately as I knew those who have been left in ditches along the highway to Romagne.

Went back along the road.

In a clearing north of the battery positions an old sawmill has been taken over as a hospital. I learned there that my perspective is getting rotten. I had been feeling that all was well in these woods—that Heinie was letting up a bit on his shell fire. But this joint is no different from those we saw about Romagne—jammed full of wounded men and dead stacked in cords outside.

The ambulances are mobilizing in numbers. G.H.Q. must be expecting a slaughter to-morrow. I guess there'll be no disappointment. Unless the batteries on the heights of the Meuse are silenced the river will be red all the way to Liege by noon.

Midnight.—The C.P.O. has begun. The engineers have started across with their boats. Rogers has not yet returned. I am going to turn in.

November 11, 2 A.M.—No sleep yet. Had to run trouble on the line to Laneuville, which is pretty well shot out. The barrage is well under way and there is word that the infantry is getting over the river in good order.

The 88s are raising hell out in the road.

The End of the Road

Gaudron Ferme, *November 11, Eight o'clock A.M.*—And this is the end of it. In three hours the war will be over. It seems incredible even as I write it. I suppose I ought to be thrilled and cheering. Instead I am merely apathetic and incredulous.

We got the word about 5:30 this morning amid a scene of great anticlimax.

The little wooden shack was silent—or at least as silent as it could be with shells, friendly and hostile, just clearing the roof. The hillside along the east wall cut off most of the light of the dawn and the tenants, undisturbed by daylight, were sleeping like dead men.

A telephone switchboard had been installed at one end of the old brick stove. Before it an operator was fighting to keep awake. Near by the adjutant lay in a chicken wire cot. Beyond the board partition four lieutenants of the regimental staff lay draped on tables that had once been part of the Boche officers' mess.

The officers did not stir in their sleep as the 77s cracked down on to the road or even when the shells of the 11th F.A.'s 155s started over toward the roads behind Pouilly with a detonation that jarred the choking dust from the rafters and the shingles from the roof. . . .

Then the big scene:
The telephone clicks.
The adjutant snores.
The operator hesitates.
A second click.
The operator plugs in:
"Hello, yes, hello, radio!"
I sat up. . . .
"He's asleep. I'll take the message. . . ."
Delay . . . Rustling of paper.
"Ready now . . . Shoot . . . I get you . . . I'll repeat:
" 'An armistice has been signed and becomes effective on the eleventh November at 11 o'clock.' "
I rolled out of my blankets.
" 'At that hour hostilities and advance are to cease. Hold the line attained and give exact information as to the line attained at that hour. No communication nor fraternizing will take place with the enemy. . . . Signed . . . Pershing' "
"That all? . . . Sure, of course it's enough. . . . Finie la guerre!"
I jumped over and grabbed the message.
The adjutant sat up in his cot.
"What's that?"
"Armistice signed," I reported. "Cease firing at 11 o'clock. . . . Radio from Eiffel."
The adjutant: "Good! Now all we have to do is keep alive until eleven o'clock. I know where there's a culvert half a kilo down the road. You'll find me under it if I'm wanted." Rolls up his blankets.
"Wish they could have decided this thing before we had to dope out that barrage." He goes out in a hurry.
The Operations Officer: "It's probably the bunk."

The Radio Officer: "Picked it up by radio from Eiffel. My men are always on the job."

I—just aware of a remarkably pleasant thought: "Slipped one over on 'em. I won't have to string that wire to the O.P."

The Medical Officer: "Quit the noise and let a fellow sleep."

The medical officer seemed to have the right idea. We all crawled back into our blankets again and stayed there until the smell of frying bacon awakened us.

Nine A.M.—Heinie has some ammunition to dispose of. He's dropping 150s on the Laneuville-Beaumont road. Not hitting anything so far.

Nine-fifteen A.M.—Order from Gen. Hall to lessen rate of fire and cease firing in thirty minutes. Runners start out to spread the glad tidings to the batteries.

Nine-forty-five A.M.—Sporadic shots. Distant shelling and machine gun chatter. Ambulances still going forward. Nobody on road who doesn't have to be there.

Ten A.M.—Whiz-bang just burst at the bridge over the creek north of here. From doorway of the regimental P.C. one can count seven bodies in a stack at the side of the road.

Ten-thirty-seven A.M.—Heavies far back of Pouilly are dumping everything they've got. G.I. cans are tearing up the road. The sector has become another Romagne. . . .

A shell just lit in the old sawmill. Men are out in the road running madly about. Other men are staggering out of the wreck and dropping as they emerge. Ambulances have been stopped and litter bearers are on their way across the clearing.

Twenty men killed—thirty-five wounded.

The war has twenty-three minutes still to go.

Ten-thirty-eight A.M.—An 11th F.A. kitchen is near the road to the south of us. The battery alongside our shack had dropped into silence when this new bombardment started. Most of the men had gone down to the kitchen for breakfast. A shell—short of the road—smashed into the soup cannon.

Fourteen dead. Four wounded.

In twenty-two minutes we shall have peace.

Ten-forty A.M.—A crash almost at our elbows has shaken the whole hillside. At first we credited the disturbance to the Germans but the facts are otherwise. The heavies of the 11th have opened up again with maximum charge. They are seeking pay for fourteen lives.

There is quite a jamboree about the 155 gun pits. Adjutants, majors, and volunteer workers of all ranks are howling "cease firing." Nobody pays any attention to them.

Me? I'm all for the 11th. I'd be over helping them if I knew how to fire a 155.

Ten-fifty-nine A.M.—The 11th has just fired its last shot.

The guns are so hot that the paint is rising from them in blisters. The crews are sweating despite the autumn chill of the air. To them peace approaches as a regrettable interruption.

Eleven A.M.—The silence is oppressive. It weighs in on one's eardrums.

We have lived and had our being in din since we left the Foret de la Reine. There seems to be something uncanny—unnatural in the all-enveloping lack of sound.

A bird is singing in the tree outside our door.

There is a tinkling note, somehow familiar and yet like something out of a life we can barely remember having lived; moisture is dripping from the eaves.

The pontoon engineers are swinging down the road to the crossing singing:

"And we'll all go back 'cause it's over, over here." Maybe they're right.

There is some cheering across the river—occasional bursts of it as the news is carried to the advanced lines. For the most part, though, we are in silence. The air is full of half-forgotten sounds: the rustling of dead leaves, the organ tone of wind in the tree tops, whispers through the underbrush, lazy echoes of voices in the road.

With all is a feeling that it can't be true. For months we have slept under the guns. For months the smash of the 75, the boom of the 155, the trembling roar of Heinie's bursting G.I. cans, have been a part of our lives. We cannot comprehend the stillness.

A doughboy at the gate is wiping his eyes with his sleeve, his mud-caked rifle caught up under his other arm. Nobody has noticed him. We all would feel like doing the same thing if we felt like doing anything at all.

I am going back to sleep.

Appendix

Appendix

Horse Burial (Note to Page 43)

The interment of horses constituted a difficult problem for the artillery. The veterinary corps had some plan for the embalming of animals killed in action and their removal to the rear to be rendered for greases and glue. But the plan proved to be impracticable chiefly through lack of transportation and road space.

The story is told of a lad in the 122nd F.A., who committed a minor infraction of rules and as a punishment was assigned to dig a grave for a horse. It took him two days to excavate a hole of the proper proportions. Then he reported to his C.O.

"The grave is dug, sir," he said. "Where's the horse?"

"The horse isn't dead yet," replied the C.O.

Gas Alarms (Note to Pages 82, 92-94)

Not all of the alarms at Bouçonville were due to nervousness on the part of the American infantry. Shortly before the jump-off the French took over the sector on our left and a French sentry was posted in the town where the road takes a turn after crossing the bridge. Right at that point was an American water cart containing a liquid so full of chlorine that one could hardly drink it without wearing a mask.

The sentry walked his post in a military manner keeping always on the alert until he got one whiff of the cart. Then he made a dash for the Klaxon.

Colonel Horatio B. Hackett (Note to Page 191)

When Col. Hackett was struck he was only a few feet from a number of officers of the infantry staff. None of them came

near him and he walked out to the road alone save for his orderly. Since that time he has met and spoken to eight or ten generals, colonels, majors and such who recall vividly how they "helped him off the field after he was wounded."

The colonel was almost dead from loss of blood when he reached a dressing station, but was pulled through by a remarkable constitution plus a miracle. He was taken to a Paris hospital where strips of his shin bone were grafted on to his jaw. For two years his jaws were wired together and he lived on liquids and pastes administered through a hole provided by the extraction of four of his front teeth. He recovered completely and during the past three years has regained all his old honors as a nationally known football executive.

The Austrian 88 (Note to Page 199)

The terrible effect of this gun was due to the fact that its shell traveled with a velocity faster than that of sound. Thus there was never any warning of its approach.

Although it had a diameter thirteen millimeters greater than that of the 75 it was not so destructive because of the fact that the shell was shorter and lighter. It was chiefly dangerous because of its effect on morale.

The 75 throws a high velocity shell also and lacks very little of the "surprise" element of the 88. Its detonation is preceded by a brief scream.

Captain Mark M. Duffy, M.C. (Note to Page 261)

Captain Duffy won the D.S.C. at Romagne by crawling on his hands and knees through a pile of burning fuse boxes to drag out some wounded men.

Captain Philip H. Newman (Note to Page 269)

Captain Newman eventually received his promotion and two citations for gallantry in action.

Advance Batteries and Platoons (Note to Page 282)

The theory of the accompanying guns is no doubt good. But like some phases of recent sumptuary laws it is impracticable.

The use of an advance battery was manifested in the fighting about Château-Thierry when four guns were unable to pull through the woods on a hilltop in the night. At daybreak the battery commander discovered German troops coming up the slope almost under his muzzles. He opened fire with terrible effect.

Whether due to the successful outcome of this accident or not, orders for the presence of artillery outfits in the infantry front lines were frequent thereafter and our own experience is probably typical. The vulnerability of horses and the intelligent supposition of the enemy that artillery ought to be removed when and if possible would seem to render these civil war tactics ineffective.

Of lesser importance is the attitude of infantry officers who have no idea as to the limitations or uses of the F.A. For the most part these officers don't want any accompanying guns. It is part of their credo (and with considerable foundation) that guns in view of the enemy draw fire.

Corporal George Gillespie (Note to Page 291, 298)

Corporal Gillespie should have received the D.S.C. The failure of his recommendation to go forward was due to the fact that as the journal indicates he was supposed to be dead. I had supposed him to be buried somewhere about Romagne until two years afterwards when I came across him unexpectedly in the hospital at Fort Sheridan.

His story subsequent to his being wounded has been widely circulated by medical men as the most remarkable narrative of human endurance resulting from the Great War.

After we left him for dead, he was brought back to consciousness by the reek of mustard gas from the shell hole in which we had laid him. He reached for his mask and discovered that the bottom of it had been shot away.

Somehow he managed to crawl out of the hole and along the lane toward the west. There he found the body of the machine gun lieutenant mentioned in the journal. He took the lieuten-

ant's gas mask and pistol and continued to crawl to the edge of the woods. There he forced two German prisoners to carry him back to the infantry reserve trenches.

He arrived at the trenches simultaneously with the German counterbarrage and was forced to lie there unattended in the mud for ten hours. It was raining most of the time.

When the infantry went forward, he resumed his crawl back toward Romagne and reached the Romagne-Sommerance road five hours later. He was picked up by an ambulance and taken to a field dressing station on the hill near Cierges. The doctors told him he was going to die and asked him if he had any word to send to his folks.

Just at that juncture the circus came over and began to drop bombs on the hilltop. Two nurses picked up the litter on which he was lying and carried him out of the danger zone. They remained with him on the hillside all night despite a heavy and continuous rain.

At noon the next day an ambulance took him to the railhead where he was transferred to a hospital train that eventually landed him at Tours. There it was discovered that the shell fragment had taken off the bottom of both lungs and had smashed most of the ribs on his left side. About all that the surgeons could do for him was to remove the traces of putrid underwear from the wound. His death was expected momentarily, but so far it has not occurred.

Of recent years he has grown a wall of fibrous structure to replace his missing ribs. His wound is entirely healed and he suffers no ill effects from it.

Sergeant Charles W. Ruckel (Note to Page 314)

After much argument the sergeant was prevailed upon to go back to a hospital. His wound was through the fleshy part of his arm and it was expected that he would be returned to the battery in a week at the outside.

He came into the office a year after the war. His arm was

gone. . . . Gangrene. He had been at the point of death for six months.

Lieutenant Colonel J. A. Rogers (Note to Page 314)

Colonel Rogers as we learned later was famous throughout the army as a polo player.

He was kept on his feet during the last days of the war only by constant doping with strychnine. He saw the show through to the finish but ruined his health doing it.

He received the Distinguished Service Medal, two citations for gallantry in action and a special certificate from Gen. Pershing for meritorious service.

Captain Morrell Tomlin (Note to Page 324)

Capt. Tomlin lay most of the night under the wreckage of the ambulance. His legs, broken when he was wounded, were fractured again. For more than a year after the war he was in a weighted frame at San Antonio. He never fully recovered from his wounds.

Captain Russell Lord (Note to Page 327)

Captain Lord, adjutant of the regiment throughout its service in France, lived until 11 o'clock.

He died six years later.

The pneumonia germ is slower than the 155 shell but just as deadly and its aim is surer.

Date Due

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The cannoneers have hairy ears
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